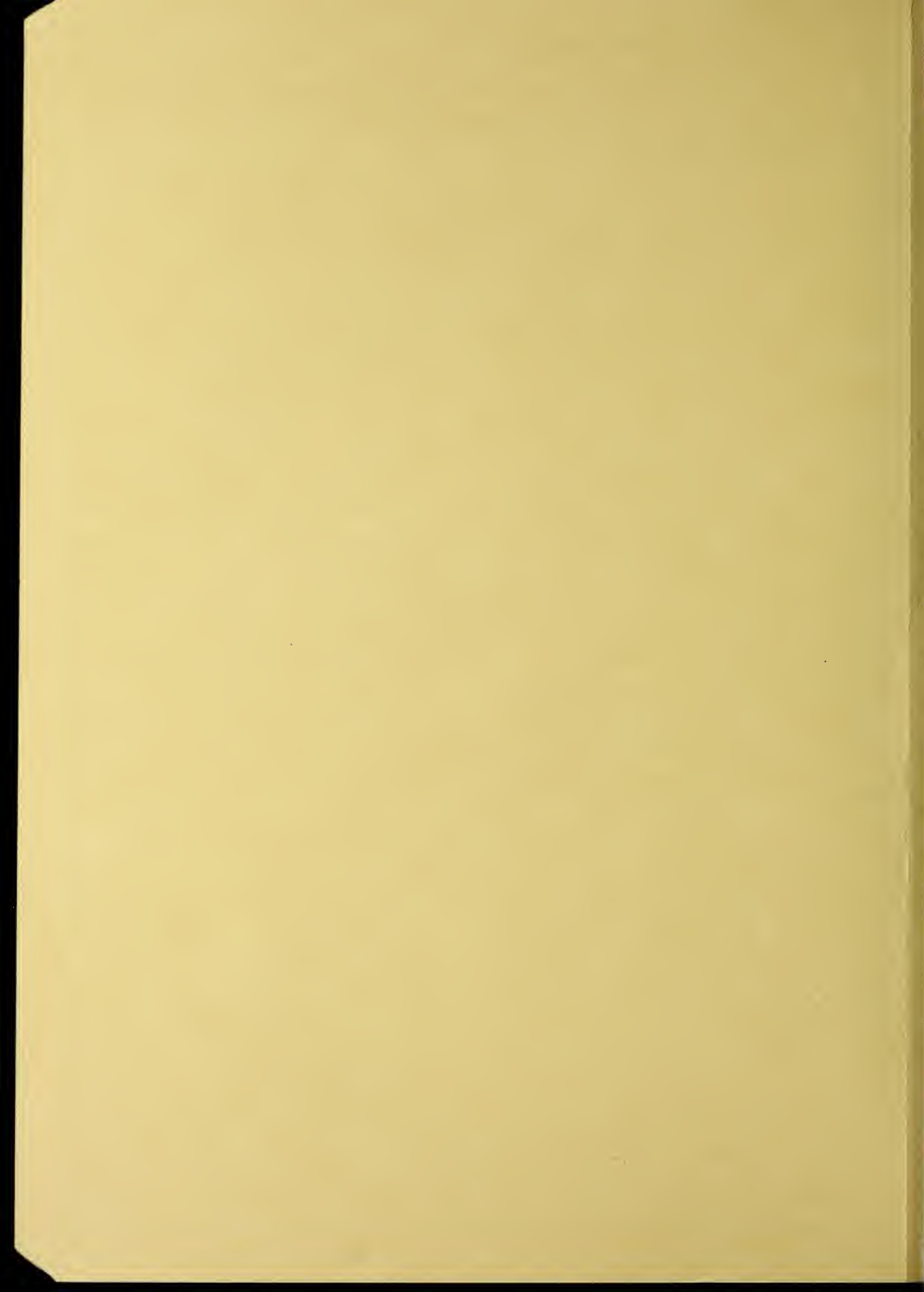


NEW YORK AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
WASHINGTON, D.C.

DRAWER 4A

CHURCHES

7 2009 027 03240



Abraham Lincoln and Religion

New York Avenue
Presbyterian Church
(Washington, D.C.)

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

NEW YORK AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
WASHINGTON, D.C.

DRAWER 41

CHURCHES

Choice of a Washington Church Awaits Harding.

President-Elect Is First of Baptist Faith—St. John's, Episcopal, Has Been Attended by Most Chief Executives.

From the Washington Star.

WHEN Senator Harding hangs up his hat in the White House and takes possession on March 4 he will be the first of our twenty-eight Presidents of the Baptist faith.

Naturally, public interest is centered on his choice of a church home, and predictions and prophecies are flying thick and fast in church circles as to which of the group of Baptist churches will be lucky enough to number the White House family in its congregation.

From the point of historical association and location, it would seem as if the First Baptist church, of which Rev. Henry Allyn Tupper is pastor, would have a strong claim. Beginning its career as a church congregation 119 years ago, it is contemporary with the most aged of the other denominations. Its first edifice was a stately one on Tenth street between E and F streets, long known as "Parson Brown's," which was later sold and converted into Ford's theater.

Only nine of the nearly four hundred churches of Washington can claim the

personally supervised its proper installation.

A PIONEER CHURCH.

Presidents Madison and Jefferson frequently attended the church, along with the courtly Hamilton and the elegant Lafayette. President Monroe accepted the use of the President's pew in 1817.

Two other Episcopal churches were the offshoot of this sturdy pioneer. The day following the dedication of the navy yard church, St. John's, in Georgetown, also was dedicated. More accessible from the White House, by reason of the more thickly settled state of Georgetown, its doorway shadowed Adams, Madison and Jefferson when the Sunday noon was strong upon them. Francis Scott Key served as vestryman.

Soon after, about 1816, came the birth of another church, likewise Episcopal and called St. John's, at Sixteenth and H streets. Beautifully and centrally located even in that day of swamp and forest, this church quickly came to be the proudest of all of the Washington Episcopal churches, and its leader both

distinction of a presidential worshiper.

Christ church, in Alexandria, like Mount Vernon, is a shrine for the visitor in search of memories of the great Father of His Country. Dedicated in 1765 and completed in 1773; built of bricks brought from England, the Rev. Lord Fairfax was its first rector. Constructed of a substantial material with the peculiar skill of the artisan of that period, this aged church stands solid and staunch, and ready for another century's service as a house of God.

There the immortal Washington laid aside all of the cares of war, home and state, for those of the vestryman.

Next to the church in Alexandria in age must come the Christ Protestant Episcopal Church of G street southeast, near the navy yard, where the aristocrats of the vicinity used to worship.

Before the close of the revolution and before the plans of the capital city were ever conceived a tobacco barn on what later was termed New Jersey avenue near D street, was a gathering place for adherents to the Episcopal faith. For thirty years this modest meeting place resounded to their songs. Thomas Jefferson and the busy Washington frequently tied their horses to nearby trees and attended a service there. Next, the Methodists rented it and established a school as well as a church.

This double usage continued until the Washington Parish was organized. In 1795, and the church on the present site erected and used first in 1809. Like the little tobacco barn, it, too, was the church of the elite of the residents of the young city. Its proximity to the navy yard gave it the name of the "Marine Corps Church," and this was strengthened by the fact that every Sunday the marines were marched from their barracks to attend services there. Marine boys comprised the choir, and when the edifice was nearing completion and the carpenters found great difficulty in placing the bell in the belfry, Gen. Archibald Henderson went to the rescue with a detail of marines and

in numbers and in the attendance of the nation's chiefs. Built when the straggling little capital was laboriously recovering from the ghastly destruction of the British in the war of 1812, it had the benefit of the "era of good feeling" which characterized the close of the Madison regime and the best part of that of Monroe.

Long dubbed the "Church of State," it has always reserved a pew for the President of the United States. Through its history of a hundred and fifteen years it has been the scene of more brilliant weddings and impressive funerals and held more distinguished personages than any other church within the city limits. Here Madison, Monroe and John Quincy Adams, resplendent in velvet breeches, jeweled buckles, silk hose, point lace and powdered wigs, set the church-going pace for society. After Monroe accepted the use of the pew at St. John's he found it more convenient to attend there, though he still kept the pew in Christ Church. It is said that he presented the old bell to St. John's.

Later on, Jackson, in his high hat and military cloak, and the elegant Van Buren followed the crowd across the drill ground-graveyard that then comprised the area of Lafayette Square. As the years brought changes in politics and also styles, the procession of dignitaries headed by the nation's chiefs continued, and Harrison, Fillmore, Tyler, Buchanan and Arthur all found beneath its roof the solace and courage they sought.

St. John's has had as worshipers Mrs. Harrison, Mrs. Taft, Mrs. Roosevelt and Mrs. Wilson, who appeared to find there their ideal church home, though their husbands were identified with other churches. The church has always been the choice of the long line of English ambassadors, as well as that of the celebrities of the army and the navy.

A few blocks away the New York Avenue Presbyterian church boasts an even greater age and almost as long a line of presidential attendants. The

growth of this church began 119 years ago.

LINCOLN'S CHURCH.

Sundays found President Lincoln in his pew there while his beloved friend, Dr. Phineas Gurley, expounded the doctrines of Calvin. It was Dr. Gurley who attended Lincoln's deathbed, preached the funeral sermon in the east room of the White House, and who accompanied the body to its last resting place in Illinois. Stories are current to the effect that Lincoln attended many an evening service unseen by the congregation. He would walk down to the church, enter the little room next to the assembly room by way of the alley door, and there in the dark with the door open just a crack, would silently remain through the service. The only way his presence there was ever known was by the trail of boots.

President John Quincy Adams was a regular attendant and a trustee, attending in all kinds of weather.

President Jackson enjoyed the services there in respect to his wife's memory until the pastor, Dr. Campbell, took a decided stand in the Peggy O'Neal affair. As this was contrary to the views held by President Jackson, the church, like the cabinet, suffered an upheaval and the head of the White House group went to St. John's thereafter.

Van Buren, Harrison, Polk, Pierce, Buchanan and Andrew Johnson all attended the church from time to time.

Presidents with Presbyterian leanings appear to rival those who cling to the tenets of the Church of England, and other churches of this denomination also proudly point to chief executives on their rosters. Of those churches the most aged is the First Presbyterian, on John Marshall place.

GARFIELD IN PULPIT.

President Garfield, upon arriving in Washington, sought for himself a membership in the Christian church, then a little frame structure on Vermont avenue, on the same site as the beautiful church since erected there as a memorial to his memory. Always the devoted friend of the Rev. Frederick Powers, Garfield not only was a regular member of this church, but he frequently filled the pulpit.

The present minister is the Rev. Earle Willey.

But one of our Presidents, William Howard Taft, was a Unitarian. He worshipped at All Souls', formerly on the corner of Fourteenth and L streets, under the Rev. U. G. B. Pierce, and where the gifted Edward Everett Hale frequently preached.

President Roosevelt, like Garfield, sought an unpretentious institution for his church allegiance when he first came to the city. After he came into the Presidency the little Dutch Reformed Church, under the Rev. John M. Schick, blossomed out into a handsome structure in front of its old location. However, Colonel Roosevelt was a frequent attendant at St. John's with his wife.

President Wilson, though affiliated with the Central Presbyterian, of which the Rev. J. H. Taylor is pastor, like all

our Presidents, divides his churching between this and St. John's, where Mrs. Wilson has long been a member.

A Look at Lincoln's Church

An account of the historic Washington church in which President Lincoln attended services is given in the National Republic by Rev. Joseph R. Sizoo, the pastor, under the caption "Where Mr. Lincoln Attended Church." The New York Avenue Presbyterian church has a history that runs back over 123 years, having been founded in 1803 and was the first Protestant church in Washington. Continuing, Reverend Sizoo says:

"This church has often been called 'The Presidents' Church,' because more presidents have attended it than any other place of worship in the city. It was

here that John Quincy Adams was a regular attendant. Then, too, it became the place of worship of Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison, Franklin Pierce, James Buchanan, Andrew Johnson. President Millard Fillmore was a very frequent worshipper here, as were also Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt. Before his presidency, Benjamin Harrison was a regular attendant upon its services. It was said of President Pierce that he rarely missed a public worship and he always went twice every Sunday to church. With Mrs. Pierce he entertained the Sunday school of the church as his official guests at the white house. And the greatest of them all, Abraham Lincoln, attended this church during all his years of service in the capital. We bless God that all of our presidents have been devout men with keen faith, men who were conscious of the presence of God in the affairs of the nation; and in the last analysis only such men can be presidents.

"Many vice presidents also worshipped here regularly and many supreme court justices, members of cabinet and leaders in the affairs of state. One of the first men's Bible classes organized in the city was that one led and taught by Justice Harlan, of the supreme court and an elder in this church. At the occasion of the centennial celebration of this church in 1903, Theodore Roosevelt, then president of the United States, standing in the Lincoln pew, brought a word of greeting to the fellowship of the church and delivered one of those stirring addresses on the place of the Christian church in the life of the nation.

"Many men prominent in the affairs of state and the nation have and continue to worship here. Vice President Dawes and his family are regular attendants upon the services of this church as also many others including members of the cabinet and members of congress. The recent ambassador from France, M. Daeschner, with his family, worshipped with us. So also the members of other legations and embassies."

THE KANSAS CITY KANSAN

SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 20, 1926.



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Lincoln's Purpose to Unite With the Church Disclosed

*Rev. Dr. Harmon H. McQuilkin Quotes Aged Parishioner
Who Had Information from Pastor Under Whom
Emancipator Sat*

But for his assassination on Friday night, April 14, 1865, Abraham Lincoln would have united with the Presbyterian Church on the following Sunday, which was Easter Day. Rev. Dr. Harmon H. McQuilkin, pastor of the First Church of Orange (Presbyterian), declared yesterday morning. Dr. McQuilkin made the statement on the authority of Mrs. Sydney Lauck, the second oldest member of the First Church, who for seventy years was a member of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington. Mrs. Lauck had the information from Rev. Dr. Gurley, who was pastor of the New York Avenue Church and who conducted the funeral service of Mr. Lincoln.

Describing Mrs. Lauck as a woman of very remarkable memory Dr. McQuilkin told how she remembered memorial services for President John Tyler when she was nine years of age, recalling the hymns which were sung, the name of the minister and the trend of his address.

"Mrs. Lauck tells me she remembers very distinctly how Mr. Lincoln came into the New York Avenue Church on Sunday mornings, leading his sons, waiting at his pew, which has now become a national shrine, until the boys had entered, and then taking his seat at the end. She recalls that it

was Mr. Lincoln's practise to attend the midweek prayer meeting, taking his seat in a vestibule off the prayer meeting room, and opening the door about six inches so that he could hear the service.

"In these days when there is an attempt on the part of liberals to make it appear that Mr. Lincoln was not in sympathy with evangelical Christianity and was in fact a liberal, this unimpeachable testimony of one who knows the facts is most interesting and valuable. Mrs. Lauck lived in Washington nearly all her life and was a member of the New York Avenue Church until she came to Orange a few years ago with the family of her son-in-law, the late Judge Howell, and became a member of the Old First Church.

"Abraham Lincoln was an evangelical Christian, and but for the assassin who took his life, he would have made public profession of his faith in Christ on Easter, 1865. Mrs. Lauck had this from Dr. Gurley himself, who told her Mr. Lincoln had made all the arrangements to be received into the membership of the New York Avenue Church.

"If Lincoln had been a liberalist he would have attended a liberal church. There were such available. No, Abraham Lincoln was a thoroughgoing evangelical New Testament Christian."

Lincoln Heirs Give Steeple-Memorial to Capital Church

(Associated Press)

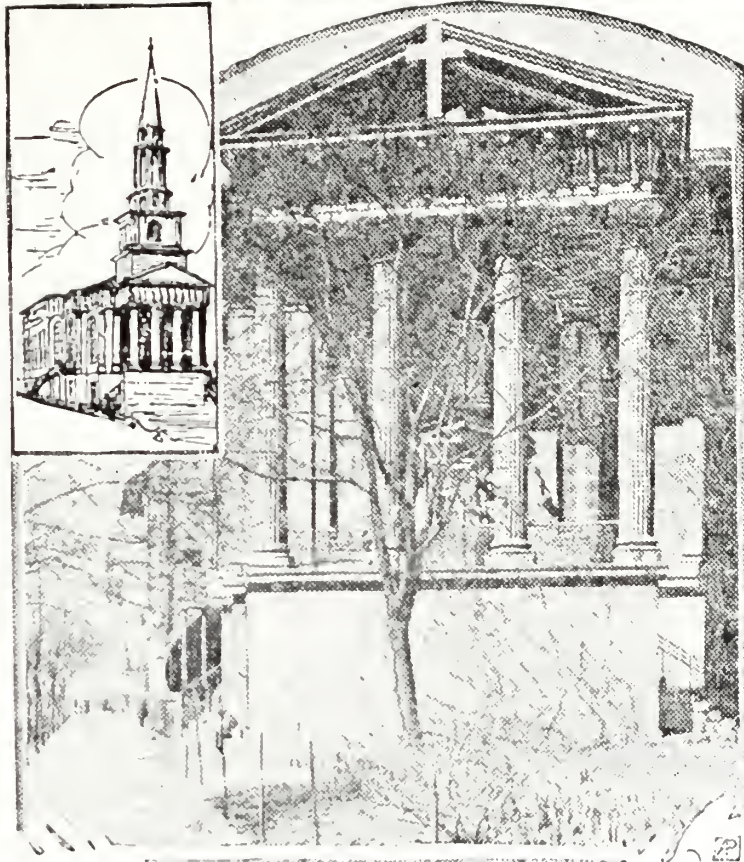
The heirs of Abraham Lincoln are to erect on an old shrine a modern memorial to the Civil War President.

During the dark days of the Civil War period President Lincoln used to go for consolation and spiritual inspiration to Dr. Phineas D. Gurley, minister of the New York avenue Presbyterian Church, located three blocks east of the White House. The old church was erected in 1859 and still stands.

Except for one change, the church today is as it was when Lincoln worshiped there every Sunday morning and every Thursday night. In 1896 Washington was hit by a severe wind and rain storm which blew down the great steeple that towered above the church. The steeple and bell have never been replaced.

Now, Mrs. Robert Todd Lincoln, daughter-in-law of the emancipator, and other members of the family, have donated funds with which to erect a new steeple. In the tower will be a set of chimes and on top of the spire will be a beacon light to guide aviators in their night flights over the city. It will be an old-fashioned steeple, but will serve a modern purpose, unheard of when Lincoln sat in his pew, which is still standing, in front of the sanctuary below.

The New York Avenue Church, which is observing its quadri-centennial this year, has numbered eleven Presidents among its regu-



The New York avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, where Abraham Lincoln worshiped, is to be restored by his family as a memorial to him. Before 1896, when a storm blew down the great steeple, the church appeared as in the drawing.

lar worshipers. In that period it has had only eight pastors in direct succession. The first pastor was the Rev. James Laurie, who came to Washington in 1803, bringing with him his bride, the cousin of Sir Walter Scott, and the original manuscript of the Lay of the Last Minstrel as a wedding gift from the poet. Dr. Laurie founded the church and remained its pastor for 50 years when he was succeeded by Dr. Gurley. Dr. Wallace Radcliffe, now pastor emeritus, has been identified with the church for 32 years, the second largest term of service. Dr. Joseph Richard Sizoo is the present pastor.

HEIRS OF ABE LINCOLN GIVE STEEPLE MEMORIAL

Spire Replaced on Church
Where Great Emancipator
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LINCOLN'S GRANDDAUGHTER GIVES BELLS TO MEMORIAL

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20.—(P)—A chime of bronze bells, the gift of Abraham Lincoln's granddaughter, will be placed in restored spire of the New York Avenue Presbyterian church here which is to be a memorial to Lincoln.

The bells are the gift of Mary Lincoln Isham and the company which is making them was headed for many years by Clinton Hanks Menckely, who was related to Lincoln through his mother, Philena Hanks Menckely.

BLACKWELL OKLA. NEWS 7 11
DEC 21, 1928

CHURCH TO GET BELLS IN MEMORY OF LINCOLN

Troy, N. Y., Dec. 12.—(P)—A set of bells will be presented Feb. 12 to the New York Avenue Presbyterian church of Washington in memory of Abraham Lincoln, who worshipped there while he was president. They are being manufactured here. The bells will be a gift of Mary Lincoln Isham, Lincoln's granddaughter.

CHICAGO ILL. NEWS
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12

LINCOLN'S CHURCH TO HONOR MEMORY

Patriotic Services to Be Conducted by Doctor Sizoo
Will Be Broadcast.

Special memorial services will be held tomorrow, both morning and evening, in the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in connection with the anniversary of Lincoln's birthday. It was this church that Abraham Lincoln attended when he was President, and the Lincoln pew is still preserved as a beautiful heritage. It was also in this church that Lincoln came for prayer. The minister, Joseph R. Sizoo, has his study in the room where Lincoln came to join in the prayer service of the week.

In keeping with an annual custom tomorrow, the Sunday before Lincoln's birthday anniversary, will be observed to give emphasis to his life. At the morning service, which will be broadcast by station WCAP, the Reverend Sizoo will preach a sermon on the subject, "Abraham Lincoln—a Heritage and Hope."

At the evening service the camps and commanders of the Sons of Veterans of the U. S. A., with various G. A. R. posts as their guests and women's auxiliaries of the division of G. A. R. and Sons of Veterans will attend. Reservations will be made for them and their guests. At this service the minister will preach on "Abraham Lincoln—the Man and the Message." At this service there will be a short special musical program.

SAYS LINCOLN PLANNED TO BE A PRESBYTERIAN

Sworn Statement by Woman Who Died in East Orange Tells of Secret Attendance at Church.

Special to The New York Times.

ORANGE, N. J., Dec. 26.—Mrs. Sidney I. Lauck, who died Monday in East Orange and for whom funeral services were held tonight, left a sworn statement asserting that Abraham Lincoln, with whom she was acquainted, was about to join the Presbyterian church when he was assassinated. Mrs. Lauck was 95 years old.

The statement, given to the Rev. Dr. Herman H. McQuiklin, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Orange, declares that Lincoln planned to become a member of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church and was assassinated two days prior to the time set for his being received as a member. This, Mrs. Lauck said, was told her by a close friend, the Rev. Dr. Melville D. Gurley, pastor of the Washington Church.

The President attended Sunday services and mid-week services, sitting in a small room adjoining the congregation where he could hear through a door slightly opened but could not be seen, she said. This was said to have been due to his modesty. Dr. Gurley was with Lincoln when he died.

Mrs. Lauck belonged to the Washington Church seventy years. She leaves one daughter, Mrs. Isbel S. Howell, widow of former Chief Justice William B. Howell of the United States Customs Court, and four grandchildren.

Mrs. Lauck will be buried in Congregational Cemetery, Washington, tomorrow. She was the widow of Henry Clay Lauck.

Lincoln Planned to Join Church, Says Affidavit of Woman Now Dead

N.Y. City World - 12-27-1928

A story of how Abraham Lincoln attended prayer meetings in a Washington Presbyterian church during many months which immediately preceded his death, but in such a manner as to escape the gaze and possible comment of the congregation, was revealed in East Orange, N. J., yesterday with the death of Mrs. Sidney Irene Lauck, who was ninety-five and who attended the same church.

Mrs. Lauck left an affidavit, dated Feb. 15, 1928, in which she said that Lincoln had planned to join the old F Street Presbyterian Church in Washington on Easter Sunday, 1865. If true, this plan was upset by his assassination on Good Friday of the same year.

Apparently wishing to avoid controversy, Mrs. Lauck placed the affidavit in the hands of her lawyer with the stipulation that it be not opened until just before her funeral. Requiem services were held for her in the First Church of Orange, Presbyterian, last night.

In the corner stone of the First Church of Orange, placed there six months ago, is another copy of the affidavit made public yesterday.

In it Mrs. Lauck said that she had been told by Dr. Melville D. Gurley, pastor of the F Street Church during Lincoln's terms, of the scheduled public acceptance by Lincoln of the Presbyterian faith. The F Street Church is now known as the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church.

She told how Lincoln for months before his death had regularly dropped into the church Wednesday evenings by a private entrance, and, sitting in a separate room alone, would listen to the services.

The World by telephone to Boston related the story of her affidavit to Worthington C. Ford, an authority on Lincolniana, last night, and without hesitation he replied:

"The story is pure fiction—I cannot say that too strongly."

Lincoln Was to Join Presbyterians, Says Affidavit

Abraham Lincoln was about to become a member of the Presbyterian Church at the time of his death, according to an affidavit made public at the funeral of Mrs. Sidney Irene Lauck in East Orange.

Mrs. Lauck died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Isabella S. Howell, widow of the late Chief Justice William B. Howell of the United States Customs Court. Mrs. Lauck says she was formerly a member of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church of Washington, and a friend of the pastor, the Rev. Dr. Melville D. Gurley.

She declared the Rev. Dr. Gurley told her, after the assassination that Lincoln had promised to join the church on Easter Sunday of 1865. Lincoln was slain on Good Friday. *N.Y. Journal (12-27-28)*

Abraham Lincoln

By JOSEPH R. SIZOO.

New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, "Where Lincoln Went to Church."

I AM writing this meditation in the room where Lincoln prayed. On this very spot where I write he came to kneel with a sainted minister to pour out the anguish of his soul to God amid the shadows of terrible days when there seemed no way out. But he knew that God would send light. It was from this room that Lincoln returned to the White House with new hope and heart. The Room Where Lincoln Prayed. If he had need of it, who shall dare refuse its practice?

How strange his life. No one ever came from a cradle so humble to a grave so illustrious. The Almighty takes pleasure in using the lowliest for the highest. The least promising are given names above all other names. Those who have accomplished most for mankind have been born in humblest homes. It was so with Lincoln. It was so with Moses—and Jesus. It will be so through the ages.

No one was more bitterly opposed. Friends were traitors. He trod the wine press of wrath and scorn. He knew what crosses were; but suffering sweetened him. It seems as if he was born to suffer. Every feature of the man: The hollow eyes, the long sallow face, the thin chest, stooping shoulders, his long silent reveries—these showed him a man of sorrows, not of today or yesterday; but long treasured and deep riven, born of weariness and pain. He fell at the foot of the altar he had built and covered it with his own blood.

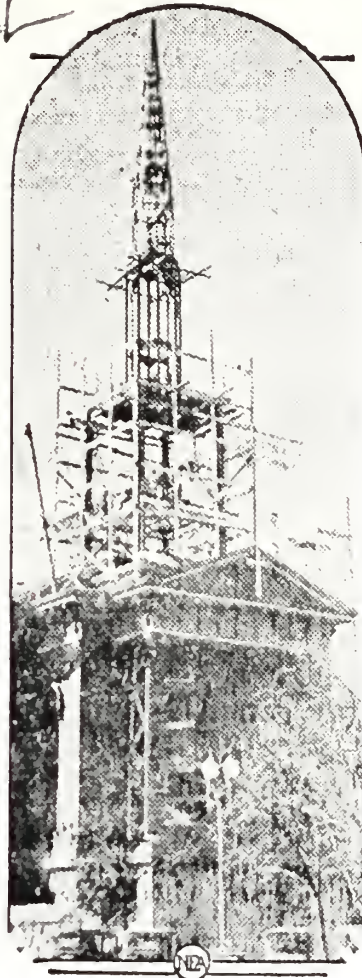
You cannot explain Lincoln. He is beyond defining. He was not the product of his age, his home, his inheritance, or his environment. He was God's man of destiny. He willed that birth. It is true. In times of crises the resources of men shrivel and the resources of God always unfold. Have heart. There is always a Lincoln for every crisis. God rules and all will be well.

Lincoln is not dead. His soul goes marching on. In this new day with its new deliverances from injustice, tyranny, intolerance, and inhumanity, the spirit of the Martyred Liberator still lives. Hallelujah! I bless God for Abraham Lincoln.

JOSEPH R. SIZOO,

New York Avenue Presbyterian Church,
"Where Lincoln Went to Church."

LINCOLN CHURCH TO AID FLYERS



Decendants of Abraham Lincoln, who attended there, have provided funds for remodeling the historic New York Avenue Presbyterian Church at Washington as an aid to aviators. At the top of the high steeple a red light will flash intermittently to warn night flyers of danger in flying to low. It is said to be the only church so equipped. 1929



UNRECORDED STORIES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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The new Lincoln spire, erected in his memory, on the New York Avenue Presbyterian church, Washington, is a gift of the family of the late Robert Todd Lincoln, son of the martyred president.

At the dedication exercises, Dr. Joseph R. Sizoo, present pastor of the church, related several interesting Lincoln stories which he believes have never been touched upon in any of the Emancipator's biographies or printed elsewhere. These stories, Dr. Sizoo points out, were given to him by the daughter of the Rev. Phineas D. Gurley, pastor of the church during Lincoln's attendance there.

One of the stories has to do with Lincoln's countermanding an order of the secretary of war during the Civil war. It seems that when the Confederates were close to Washington and the fighting was heavy, all churches in the District were requisitioned for use as hospitals. One Sunday when Mr. Lincoln was in the congregation Dr. Gurley announced that the next Sunday would be the last that the church could be used for services as it had been requisitioned by the secretary of war for use as a hospital for wounded soldiers. Whereupon the President rose in his pew and said: "Dr. Gurley, we are too much in need of this church these days; we cannot let it be closed; I countermand the order."

The other story tells how the great Emancipator "more than once told Dr. Gurley that he was ready to join the church, and that he hesitated, not because of any disbelief or disapproval, but because he feared he did not measure up to the standards of Christianity." Although Lincoln never joined any church he worshipped regularly at the New York avenue edifice.—The Pathfinder.

RICHMOND, MICH., REVIEW
FRIDAY, AUGUST 2, 1929

New York Herald Tribune, Feb. 9, 1931.

President Occupies Pew Formerly Held by Lincoln

Mr. Hoover Hears Presbyterian Service at Washington

WASHINGTON, Feb. 8 (AP).—In the church where Abraham Lincoln worshiped, President Hoover today heard a plea for a return of the faith and compassion characteristic of the Civil War Chief Executive. Departing from his custom of attending the Friends Meeting House, President Hoover went to the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church to its annual Lincoln Birthday service. Sitting in the pew where Lincoln worshiped, the President and Mrs. Hoover heard the pastor, the Rev. Joseph Richard Sizoo, deplore decadence in spiritual, economic and moral realms and assert that the "lost radiance of the world" might be returned through faith and compassion.

Lincoln, the minister said, lived in a darkening world, politically, intellectually and spiritually, but he "brought men back to a faith in God" and brought a new sense of compassion.

PRESIDENT OCCUPIES PEW USED BY LINCOLN

**With Mrs. Hoover, He Attends
Memorial Service in New
York Avenue Church.**

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 8.—Observing a custom of long standing, the "Lincoln pew" in the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church was occupied today by the successor of the martyr President. President and Mrs. Hoover attending the morning memorial service.

The Chief Executive and the first lady were met at the door of the church by two of its deacons, who escorted them to the pew, in the centre aisle eight rows from the front, which was occupied by President Lincoln throughout his life in Washington.

At the close of the service the Rev. Dr. Sizoo, with a word to the congregation, descended from the pulpit and advancing to the Lincoln pew joined the President, whom he escorted from the church, the audience standing as they passed up the aisle.

In his sermon Dr. Sizoo took as his text the lines from the Gospel of St. Matthew, "Give us of your oil for our lamps are going out," drew a parallel between the times and conditions faced by Lincoln and those confronted by the world today.

"Now as then," he said, "there is darkness in our international, economic, moral and spiritual outlook, and now, as then we need, perhaps more than ever, a spiritual basis of living, and the sense of compassion, which were the two great contributions of Lincoln to the life of his times."

**NEW YORK CITY TIMES
FEBRUARY 9, 1931**

Where Mr. Lincoln Attended Church

The Present Pastor of Lincoln's Church Tells of the
Historical Significance of This Capital Shrine

I SHALL never forget that day in February when I stood for the first time in the pulpit of this most historic church as the guest preacher for that day. Like so many, I was quite unfamiliar with the amazing historical contacts which this church has established throughout its years of existence. It was on the Sunday that Woodrow Wilson was quietly sleeping away. The whole nation was kneeling at the hearth-stone of his home praying that he might be spared, or that the nation might be given the patience of unanswered prayer. While that very prayer was being offered he actually made the great venture and laid down his sword. There was a tenseness and a peculiar awe about this city on that day. You could feel it wherever you went. When one of the ushers brought to me the news that Woodrow Wilson had passed away I was standing, for the first time in my life, by the Lincoln pew upon which that very moment a ray of light was playing. As I stood there I thanked God for that pew, a witness to the Christian devotion that has always manifested itself in the lives of all of our American Presidents from the very beginning.

Since that time I have become the minister of this church and I want to tell you the simple story of this shrine of Christian faith, a trysting place where many Presidents and leaders of the nation have found inspiration and courage.

THE New York Avenue Presbyterian Church has a continuous history that runs back over 123 years. Its history well nigh parallels the history of the capital city. It was founded in 1803 when hunters shot quail near the Capitol and when horses dragged coaches hub deep in clay over the nearly impassable road of Pennsylvania Avenue. It was the first Protestant church in Washington. It began when the republic was an experiment and when the area of the United States extended but little beyond the coast line states. It was organized during the Jefferson administration when a group of Scotch-Irish Americans who had fought in the Revolution came to Washington with the planting of the government here. The first meetings of the church were held in the Treasury building and the first minister of the church was the sainted Dr. James Laurie, who was for many years a clerk in the Treasury Department because the salary he received from the few people who worshipped in his church was quite inadequate. After a few years, with funds which he had secured from donors as far north as Boston and as far south as Savannah, he built the first little brick church, subsequently called Willard Hall, which was actually the first place for Protestant worship in this city. Since that time and some fifty years later the church property was removed to its present location on New York Avenue, H and Thirteenth Streets, where it stands to the very present.

There are many items of unusual significance about this church. While its history runs back 123 years, it has had only seven ministers. I am the seventh and began my ministry here but a few years back. Then, too, it is a matter of historic interest that in this church there was held the farewell service to General Lafayette on the occasion of his departure from the country at the close of his last visit. It was from the pulpit of this historic church that John Quincy Adams, then President of the United States, delivered the farewell address. Then, too, it is interesting to recall that the wife of the first minister of the church was the first cousin

By Rev. Joseph R. Sizoo

Pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Where Lincoln Worshipped

of Sir Walter Scott, who presented to her at the occasion of her wedding the manuscript of one of his novels. On the very ground where this first Protestant church of Washington stood the present New Willard Hotel now stands.

THIS church has often been called "The Presidents' Church" because more Presidents have attended it than any other place of worship in the city. It was here that John Quincy Adams was a regular attendant. Then, too, it became the place of worship of Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison, Franklin Pierce, James Buchanan, Andrew Johnson. President Millard Fillmore was a very frequent worshipper here, as were also Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt. Before his presidency, Benjamin Harrison was a regular attendant upon its services. It was said of President Pierce that he rarely missed a public worship and he always went twice every Sunday to church. With Mrs. Pierce he entertained the Sunday School of the church as his official guests at the White House. And the greatest of them all, Abraham Lincoln, attended this church during all his years of service in the capital. We bless God that all of our Presidents have been devout men with keen faith, men who were conscious of the presence of God in the affairs of the nation; and in the last analysis only such men can be Presidents.

Many Vice Presidents also worshipped here regularly and many Supreme Court justices, members of cabinet and leaders in the affairs of state. One of the first men's Bible classes organized in the city was that one led and taught by Justice Harlan, of the Supreme Court and an elder in this church. At the occasion of the centennial celebration of this church in 1903, Theodore Roosevelt, then President of the United States, standing in the Lincoln pew, brought a word of greeting to the fellowship of the church and delivered one of those stirring addresses on the place of the Christian church in the life of the nation.

Many men prominent in the affairs of state and the nation have and continue to worship here. Vice President Dawes and his family are regular attendants upon the services of this church as also many others including members of the cabinet and members of Congress. The recent ambassador from France, M. Dueschuer, with his family, worshipped with us. So also the members of other legations and embassies.

One of the most impressive moments in the whole history of this church occurred last summer when the great commoner, William Jennings Bryan, lay dead in the church. When his body was brought into the church thousands of people were waiting in line for an opportunity to view him in his flag-draped casket. That procession never ended night or day from Wednesday until Friday. From the pulpit of the church there was spoken to his bereaved family and innumerable friends words of comfort and words of praise which he so richly deserved. Mr. Bryan had something to do with my entrance into the Christian ministry; he always worshipped in this church whenever he was in Washington; and it was singularly appropriate that he should be carried from it to his final resting place in Arlington.

This church has become significant in the history of the Presbyterian Church at large because it was here that the general assembly met before which there came the famous Briggs trial. It was in this church that the committee on revision of the confession of faith of the Presbyterian



© Harris & Ewing

Rev. Joseph R. Sizoo



Church held its meeting and in 1899 it was in this church that that general council of the Reformed Churches throughout the world holding the Presbyterian system of government was organized.

BUT while there are many historical associations which bind this church to the life of the nation surely foremost of them all is the fact that it was here that Abraham Lincoln worshipped while he was President of our country. We are very proud of the Lincoln pew which has been preserved until the very present, making it a shrine within a shrine. A minister of the church once said of this pew: "I had rather sit in that pew, if it were made of mud or dirt, than in one of beaten gold: it will be a mecca for our Presbyterians, and in influence of patriotism for our children and children's children."

One day a rather distinguished American writer attended service here and was granted the privilege of sitting in the Lincoln pew. It moved him profoundly; indeed a person must have a heart of stone not to be touched by that privilege. Going to his home after that service he wrote this epic on the Lincoln pew:

Within the historic church both eye and soul
Perceived it. 'Twas the pew where Lincoln sat—
The only Lincoln God hath given to men—
Olden among the modern seats of prayer,
Dark like the 'sixties, place and past akin.
All else has changed, but this remains the same,
A sanctuary in a sanctuary.

Where Lincoln prayed!—What passion had his soul—
Mixt faith and anguish melting into prayer
Upon the burning altar of God's fane,
A nation's altar even as his own!

Where Lincoln prayed!—Such worshippers as he
Make thin ranks down the ages. Would'st thou know
His spirit suppliant? Then must thou feel
War's fiery baptism, taste hate's bitter cup,
Spend similar sweat of blood vicarious,
And sound like cry, "If it be possible!"
From stricken heart in new Gethsemane.

Who saw him there are gone, as he is gone;
The pew remains, with what God gave him there,
And all the world through him. So let it be—
One of the people's shrines.

ABRAMHAM LINCOLN had a very strange but impressive custom when attending the church services. It was always his habit when the so-called "pastoral prayer" was offered to stand up. As the sainted Dr. Phineas D.

word. One of those two young men later became an elder in this church. What a message and a heritage that, to all the people of the land! The room where Lincoln prayed! If he had need of it who shall dare refuse its practice?

THERE is a very interesting aside which involves the two sons of Lincoln in a memorable incident in the life of this church. Lincoln made the discovery that his two boys were not coming to the Sunday School very regularly and it annoyed him. He asked his two boys where they did attend Sunday School and they made the reply that they preferred to attend the Sunday School of the Fourth Church of this city. They said to the President it was more fun to go there. When the President asked his boys what they meant by that statement they replied: "It is much more fun to attend church there because we like to hear the pew doors slam when the minister prays for the President of the United States and many of the congregation with southern convictions leave the church in anger."

On Good Friday when Lincoln died the minister of this church, Dr. Gurley, was with him, kneeling in prayer. Would that we might have that prayer preserved for us. It is strange that the point of the pencil of the stenographer broke as the minister offered it. What a dark day it was for this church that Easter day when Lincoln lay dead in the capital of the nation that has

Gurley, minister of the church at that time, prayed, Lincoln felt that he came in the very presence of God and therefore felt moved to stand. It must have been an impressive sight, and there are some today who still remember it, to see the President of the United States and Senator Bradey, who also maintained that custom, stand in reverence and with bowed head while the minister sought the divine guidance upon the nation in those darkest of days which we pray by the Providence of God may never return.

When the dark days of the Civil War were upon us and hospital accommodations failed to care for the wounded soldiers, word went out from the army headquarters in Washington that all the churches in Washington were to be turned over to the army for hospital purposes. The following Sunday morning Dr. Gurley made the announcement from the pulpit that that church would be closed indefinitely for that reason. Lincoln was in attendance upon the church at the time and appeared greatly surprised. As soon as the minister had finished the announcement he arose in the pew saying, "This church shall not be closed. We need it too much. I shall countermand the order." And yet now and then some one will say and write that Lincoln had no use for and was little concerned with the church.

We have a room on the first floor of the church of which we are very proud because it was to this room that Lincoln came to attend the midweek prayer service. It is a small room adjoining the main lecture room where the services were held. But, lest some one make use of them for political purposes, Lincoln sat in the small adjoining room with the door partially ajar so that he could hear these people pray to God and commit the issues of the war to the Almighty. It was not until the close of his life that this fact became known at all. Only the minister of the church and the secret service men were acquainted with that fact, but one day when two young men desired to know who these strangers were leaving the little room at the close of the prayer meeting, they traced Lincoln by the large foot prints made in the fresh fallen snow to the White House. When these same young men told Dr. Gurley that they had made the discovery he asked them upon the pledge of honor not to make it known and they kept their (Continued on page 45)

How strange his me: No one ever went from a cradle so humble to a grave so illustrious. The Almighty takes pleasure in using the lowliest for the highest. The least promising are given names above all other names. Those who have accomplished most for mankind have been born in humblest homes. It was so with Lincoln. It was so with Moses—and Jesus. It will be so through the ages.

You cannot explain Lincoln. He is beyond defining. He was not the product of his age, his home, his inheritance or his environment. He was God's man of destiny. He willed that birth, it is true. In times of crises the resources of men shrivel and the resources of God always unfold. Have heart. There is always a Lincoln for every crisis. God rules and all will be well.

Lincoln is not dead. His soul goes marching on. In this new day with its new deliverances from injustice, tyranny, intolerance and inhumanity, the spirit of the martyred liberator still lives. Hallelujah! I bless God for Abraham Lincoln and that I am counted worthy to minister in that church where stands his pew, a shrine within a shrine, hallowed by his hours of worship.

New York Avenue
Presbyterian Church

WASHINGTON, D. C.



Ministers

JOSEPH RICHARD SIZOO, D. D., Litt. D.

ALBERT EVANS, D. D.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1934

MORNING WORSHIP

11 o'clock

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Organ Prelude—"Jesus Grant Me This I Pray".....*Kitson*
*Call to Worship
*The Doxology
*Invocation and Lord's Prayer
*Responsive Reading—Selection 10, Second Portion
*Gloria Patri
Scripture Lesson—Luke 15
Reception to Members
Response by the Congregation—Hymn No. 345, vs. 1, 2, 3, 4
Offertory—"God So Loved the World".....*Stainer*
Communion Address—"GIVE ME THE PORTION"
*Hymn No. 327
The Words of the Institution
*The Communion Hymn, No. 339
*The Apostles' Creed
Administration of the Lord's Supper
Prayer
Benediction and Silent Prayer (Congregation Seated)
Response by Choir
Organ Postlude—"Reve Angelique".....*Rubinstein*

* The Congregation standing.

EVENING WORSHIP

8 o'clock

Organ Prelude—"Andante".....*Mendelssohn*
*Call to Worship
*Hymn No. 35
*Hymn No. 477
The Prayer
Gloria in Excelsis
Scripture Lesson—John 14
Offertory—"Nearer My God to Thee".....*Salter*
*Hymn No. 193
The Sermon—"JESUS AND WORLD WEARINESS"
Benediction and Silent Prayer (Congregation Seated)
Response by Choir
Organ Postlude—"Fanfare".....*Dubois*

* The Congregation standing.

The Ushers are requested to seat no one after the opening of the service except at such times as may be designated to them. Those who come late are requested to be guided by the Ushers in this respect.

MINISTRY OF SERVICE

JOSEPH RICHARD SIZOO.....Minister
ALBERT EVANS.....Associate Minister
ERNESTINE NIEMEYER.....Bogota, Colombia, S. A.
EDNA F. SANDERS.....Philippine Islands
JANET C. ATKINSON.....Church Visitor
PHEBE B. FLEMING.....Secretary
MARIE R. JOROLEMON.....Financial Secretary

MINISTRY OF MUSIC

PAUL W. FISHBAUGH.....Organist and Director
DOROTHY W. FISHBAUGH.....Soprano
RUTH KOBBE.....Contralto
ARTHUR C. GORBACH.....Basso
BERNHARD G. SPILLE.....Tenor

TODAY

The flowers of the sanctuary are offered by a grateful son to the memory of a noble mother whose holy life and purity of devotion will always be cherished in this fellowship.

We welcome to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper all those who have named His name and confessed Him as their Lord and Saviour. While it is the solemn duty of the Christian to observe the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, it is not as those who are driven that we come to this service. With that unspeakable joy in our hearts and with gratitude for His redeeming love, we approach the Christ of the Communion. May a new courage be born in our hearts and a new patience come to our spirits. For all who enter our fellowship today, henceforth to share our work and worship, we bid a most cordial welcome. May God grant that the ties which bind these members to our Church may be to the glory of His name and the coming of His matchless love.

The young people of the Christian Endeavor Society will have their fellowship tea in the Parish Hall at six o'clock with Miss Winifred Sias as the hostess. At 6.45 o'clock Miss Jane Lybrand will lead the discussion of George Washington.

This evening at eight o'clock Dr. Sizoo will begin a series of Sunday evening Lenten studies dealing with character appraisals. Tonight his subject will be, "Jesus and World Weariness."

NOTES FOR THE WEEK

Tuesday, 3.00 P. M. The Lincoln Guild will hold its monthly meeting in the Lecture Room. Mrs. Netta S. Scott will speak on, "Personal Reminiscences of Hawaii." Tea will be served following the meeting. All women of the Church are invited to share this program.

Wednesday, 11.00 A. M. The annual meeting of the Wednesday Morning Guild will be held at the home of Mrs. E. M. Foster, 6 Hesketh Street, Chevy Chase, Maryland. Mrs. Schoenhals and Mrs. Foster will be joint hostesses. The mission study talk will be given by Mrs. Frank E. Edgington. Members are asked to notify Mrs. Schoenhals, Cleveland 5374, by Tuesday morning if they can attend the meeting.

Wednesday, 4.00-6.00 P. M. The Tuxis Club will hold a silver tea in the Lecture Room. All friends of the Church are invited.

Wednesday, 8.00 P. M. The Board of Deacons will hold its annual meeting in the Lecture Room.

Thursday, 8.00 P. M. The usual Mid-week Prayer Service will be observed. Dr. Sizoo will begin a series of special Lenten talks on the general theme, "The Kingdom of Heaven." His subject this week will be, "The Seed."

Friday, 8.00 P. M. The Christian Endeavor Society will hold its monthly business meeting and social in the Parish Hall.

Saturday, 2.00 P. M. The Evening Missionary Society will hold its Reading, Sewing and Knitting Circle at the home of Miss Lida B. Earhart, 2901 Connecticut Avenue. All members are cordially invited.

GENERAL NOTES

The Sacrament of Infant Baptism will be observed next Sunday morning, February 25, at the morning worship. Parents wishing to present their children at this time are asked to notify the Church Office.

Duplex envelopes for the year beginning March 1, 1934, may be obtained in the Lecture Room following the services today.

The Mayflower Lenten Lectures which Dr. Sizoo has delivered for the past seven years in the ballroom of the Mayflower Hotel will be continued this year. The lectures are from 11.30 to 12.30 each Tuesday, beginning February 27 and ending March 27. This series of Lenten lectures will be broadcast over Station WRC. The general theme will be "The Future of Religion and the Religion of the Future." A detailed description of the special Lenten services will be found in a separate leaflet which may be secured from one of the ushers.

Memories of Lincoln

THE enviable prestige acquired by becoming the President's church is—well, a bit “disrupting,” to quote one minister who knows.

It was not like this in the day of the Adamses, on whom religion sat so heavily. Nor in the days of the sad, patient Lincoln, who, although he never joined

a church, called his Bible the “rock” and claimed it “fed his soul.” During his presidency, he allied himself so closely with the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church that Washington people to this day fondly call it the Lincoln church.

The pew where he sat swathed in his great old shawl, long legs cramped in the narrow space, carries his name on a silver plate, a shrine within a shrine. Lincoln made everyone welcome beside him. Once his long arm swept in a forlorn old man, wandering bewildered in the aisle. Today this pew is roped off, reserved for distinguished guests. The Sunday nearest February twelfth, the President of the United States is invited to occupy it—a custom honored by every Administration since Theodore Roosevelt. The church chimes and the beautifully illuminated spire, a beacon for aeroplanes, were the gift of Mrs. Robert Lincoln, a memorial to Father Abraham.

During the trying days of the war, Lincoln often used to come to the Thursday-night prayer meetings, but sat so inconspicuously in a darkened anteroom that almost none knew he was there. One Thursday night two youths dropped in to see Doctor Gurley, the pastor, spied the gamut stranger huddled there, traced his footprints in new-fallen snow to the White House and returned wide-eyed to tell the pastor:

“That was Lincoln! No one else in Washington has such big feet!”

Doctor Gurley swore them to secrecy and the lads kept their promise. The tale of Lincoln's mid-week devotions did not leak out until after his death.

Our Forgotten President

IN THIS MONTH IN which is celebrated the birthday anniversary of George Washington as the first president of the United States, it is interesting to recall that another actually preceded him in that office.

Seymour Wemyss in "John Hanson Our First President" gives this bit of early American history:

After the United States had secured independence from the mother country and had taken its place among the nations of the world, its first act was to elect a President; its second, to summon the commander of the armies to Philadelphia, there to receive official thanks for the great service he had rendered. George Washington appeared before John Hanson, first President of the United States, on November 28, 1781, at Independence Hall.

The scene, as we try to recapture it now, centers about these two men; the general, resplendent and commanding in the uniform he had so distinguished—and the President, in the plain garb of a citizen, George Washington and John Hanson.

Many years Washington's senior, Hanson was a striking figure, too: a tall man, dignified and reserved. It was a proud moment of his life.

Only several weeks before, on November 5, 1781, Hanson had been elected to the highest office in the gift of the American people. Only a few hours after the election, the secretary of Congress sent to the governors of the various states and to other high officials notice of the action which had been taken. It read:

"I have the honor to inform you that this day pursuant to the Articles of Confederation the United States in Congress assembled proceeded to the choice of a President and have elected for the ensuing year his Excellency John Hanson."

In Statuary Hall, under the great dome of the National Capitol Building at Washington, D. C., stands a figure straight across the Hall from that of George Washington. The statue is of heroic bronze. The man himself is attired in a frock coat, a triangular hat, knee breeches, and all the conventional garb of a gentleman of those days. He carries in his hand

a heavy walking stick. Under this statue is the name — John Hanson.

Beside the figure of Hanson stands that of Charles Carroll. These two men represent the State of Maryland in Statuary Hall, and they were placed there by that state as the two greatest men it had ever produced. But John Hanson has been forgotten.

John Hanson, first President of the United States, was born at Mulberry Grove, Charles County, Maryland, on April 3, 1715. At various times he represented Charles County in the Maryland Assembly. In 1773 he moved from Charles County up into Frederick County. For a long time before the Revolution he was a force in colonial politics. He was brought up with the movement for independence.

The patriots of Frederick County, under Hanson's leadership, played an active part in the early days of the Revolution. Although then a man in his sixties—at the time he was elected President Hanson was sixty-six years old—he soon became the dominant factor in Maryland's war-time activities. He was the leading figure in the early sessions of the Maryland Assembly. He was selected to head the Maryland delegation to Congress at Philadelphia during the latter part of the war.

Hanson took the leadership in the historic land fight, which is described as the war within the war. The trouble arose when the various states tried to interpret the meaning of James I's indefinite land grant. Hanson rose to the heights both as a statesman and as a master politician. He led the State of Maryland in a furious fight against forming a country which would be torn by the strife and dissension of land claims. He won the victory and it made him the first President of the United States.

Little is known about Hanson's private life during his year as President at Philadelphia. For some reason the section of Washington's diary from November 5, 1781, the date of Hanson's election, until the fall of the year 1784 is missing. But we do know the public acts of John Hanson as President. He retired from the office in November, 1782. His health had broken under the strain of the existence he had been leading for the last seven years, and he died November 22, 1783, nearly two years after he had thanked Washington in the name of America.

Lincoln's Church Going

In a feature magazine article Margaret Norris writes of the trials of the Minister who has the president of the United States as a member of his congregation.

The enviable prestige acquired by becoming the President's church is—well, a bit "disrupting," to quote one minister who knows.

It was not like this in the day of the Adamses, on whom religion sat so heavily. Nor in the days of the sad, patient Lincoln, who, although he never joined a church, called his Bible the "rock" and claimed it "fed his soul." During his presidency, he allied himself so closely with the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church that Washington people to this day fondly call it the Lincoln church.

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Post Staff Photo.

In This Pew Lincoln Sat

Dr. Peter Marshall, pastor of New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, is shown telling Betty Anne Simpson and Molly Brown, of Fairmont Junior College, the pew they occupy was used by President Lincoln and his family

Bu

Wash. Post 2-12-40



130 Overton Place,
Keyser, W. Va.,
March 4, 1940.

Dr. Louis A Warren,
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Dear Dr. Warren;-

During the last two years it has been my good fortune to be closely associated with the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Washington, D. C., sometimes called the Lincoln Church, as it was here that President Lincoln attended church during his years in Washington. And I have been delighted, and at the same time greatly surprised to find that a great deal of the most important history of Lincoln's Religious Life is interwoven with the history of the New York Avenue Church, and has been given little or no appreciation by his biographers.

I am taking the liberty of sending to you a copy of an article which I recently wrote, and which has been printed only in this small church paper. Numerous requests have come to me to take some steps to give this article broader publicity, as the information contained in it is so entirely different from other things that have been published regarding the religious life of Lincoln.

I have also secured a complete copy of the funeral address delivered by Dr. Gurley, as well as a copy of the entire Funeral Service conducted in the East Room of the White House. This, I feel sure, would give the general public a better understanding of the Great Man whom Herndon and Lamson have ardently tried to claim for "their own Atheistic Cult".

Dr. Gurley's daughter, Mrs. Adams, is a most interesting "young woman" of eighty years. She remembers many things told her by her father and mother who were intimate friends of the Lincoln family. Mrs. Adams has turned over her collection of Lincoln treasures to the church, among these numerous gifts made to her father by the President and Mrs. Lincoln.

I have secured good pictures of the Lincoln Pew, the Lincoln Chapel, and the Lincoln Room. The tower and chimes of the New York Avenue Church were presented to the church, by Robert Todd Lincoln's family, as a memorial to President Lincoln.

Now, I would like very much to have your advice regarding the placing of this article where it would be more generally read. I would also be most happy if I could find a market for this material where I might secure some remuneration for it.

You are in touch with every source of Lincoln material, and I will greatly appreciate any suggestions that you may make regarding this article, and other historical material which I have.

With many thanks in advance for your interest and suggestions, I am,

Yours most sincerely,

Leonora H. Wood

March 11, 1940

Miss Leonora W. Wood
130 Overton Place
Keyser, West Virginia

Dear Miss Wood:

I had the pleasure of worshipping in the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church on Sunday, February 11, but it was not possible for me to find a vacant seat in the auditorium but enjoyed the services very much.

I was surprised indeed that the minister did not know that the funeral oration of Rev. Gurley was available as I have often referred to it as it appeared in the newspapers. I am glad that you have resurrected it.

I regret I cannot advise you how to proceed in the publication of your article so that you might be reimbursed for your work, as you certainly deserve to be. One receives little compensation for this type of work, and, while we might be able to dispose of forty or fifty copies of the booklet at a price which you might ask, I regret that we do not publish booklets except those edited here.

Very truly yours,

LAW/ee
L. A. Warren

Director

March 11, 1940

Miss Dorothy M. Wood
150 Preston Place
Hagerstown, West Virginia

Dear Miss Wood:

I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 10th inst. regarding the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church on Sunday, February 11, and it was not possible for me to find a vacant seat in the auditorium but enjoyed the service very much.

I was surprised indeed that the minister did not know that the funeral oration of Rev. George Washington was given at the funeral of Rev. George Washington in the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. I am glad that you have remembered it.

I regret I cannot advise you how to proceed in the acquisition of your edition as that you might be disappointed in your work, as you certainly deserve to be. The reviewer little comprehension for this type of work, and while we might be able to supply of forty or fifty copies of the book at a price which you might ask, I regret that we do not publish books except those which are of great value.

Very truly yours,

Director

L.H. 100
L. H. 100

EMMA GURLEY ADAMS . . . NBC RADIO INTERVIEW

by Robert St. John, February 14, 1943

S. RUCKMICK
100 Ottawa St., Forest Hgts.
Oxon Hill, Md. 20021

This is Robert St. John, introducing you to more PEOPLE. TODAY I'm going to DEPART from my USUAL procedure to introduce you to a little, grey-haired lady who lives here in Washington with her memories. There's nothing about THIS war anywhere-in-her-story, but it IS an appropriate story to tell TODAY, half way between LINCOLN's birthday and WASHINGTON's birthday. It's a tale of the dim past, with a lot of anecdotes which have never been told PUBLICLY before and yet SHOULD be preserved for posterity. And so . . let me present Emma Gurley Adams . . 84 years old, almost stone-deaf . . barely five feet tall . . a little old lady with snow-white hair and keen bright eyes which sparkle like diamonds when she's talking of the past. Emma Gurley Adams, daughter of Doctor Phineas Gurley, who was one of Abraham Lincoln's best friends.

Emma remembers that OTHER War-President because he used to spend a lot of time in Doctor Gurley's Presbyterian Church here in Washington listening to what HE called "the plain, unvarnished, Gospel-truth." The two men were almost twins . . the same height . . the same weight . . similar in many respects . . and good companions. Back in the 60's, when Lincoln was wrestling with grave problems of war here in Washington (as ROOSEVELT is today) the two tall, lanky men used to walk the streets of the Capital at night, after everyone else was asleep, talking-things-over. Emma (that's what everyone calls her) Emma remembers one night when her father went out tramping the streets with Lincoln and came home late,

from Robert St. John
3/31/75
M. St. John

2

carrying the President's own, beautiful walking stick. She remembers her father explaining that when he left Lincoln at the White House, the President gave him the cane as a gift, saying: "You'll probably need it on the way home, to protect yourself."

MEMORIES! The little old lady recalls, with tears in her eyes, that tragic night when Abraham Lincoln went with his wife and some friends to Ford's Theater to sit in a box, and RELAX (now that the war was over) and watch a play called "Our American Cousin." Emma was a curly-haired child of six, then. That night she'd been put to bed early. LATER, the rest of the family turned in. They were all asleep, in their home on Eye Street, when a few blocks away, in Ford's Theater, a half-insane actor named John Wilkes Booth, got into the Presidential Box, and SHOT Lincoln in the back of the head, and leaped to the stage, shouting a Latin Motto, and fled through the wings (in spite of his broken leg), and escaped on a waiting horse. MEMORIES. Emma remembers waking up that night. A CARRIAGE was clattering down Eye Street. It stopped in front of the Gurley house. Her father jumped out of bed and threw open the window. Suddenly he turned around and said: "It's the WHITE HOUSE carriage." Everyone got up quickly. What was the WHITE HOUSE carriage doing in Eye Street at THAT time of night? Then, old Tom Crosse, the President's Negro body-servant, jumped out of the carriage and shouted: "Mrs. Lincoln says for Doctor Gurley to come quick. The President has been SHOT."

MEMORIES!. . . Memories of her father jumping into his clothes . . . Emma crying and begging to go too. Her Father pushing her aside, and rushing off, to be WITH the President during his dying

moments. Then the long wait. Crowds gathering out on Eye Street . . probably on OTHER street's all over the city, as fast as the word flashed around that SOMETHING had happened to Abraham Lincoln! The long wait. And finally, the commotion out in Eye Street as Doctor Gurley came home . . walking very slowly . . with the spirit gone-from-him. Men . . stepping out of dark doorways . . men, blocking the preacher's path and asking: "Is it TRUE? Tell us, Doctor Gurley, did he REALLY get shot?" "Doctor Gurley, did they REALLY shoot him?" Her father remained silent, but everyone could tell the ANSWER from the tears in his eyes, as he pushed his way through the crowds and came into the house . . as miserable as his little daughter had ever seen him. AN OLD LADY'S MEMORIES! The memory of that day not long ago, when Secretary Harold Ickes gave her a picture which she considers her most valuable possession . . a picture of the death scene . . with the President stretched-out on a bed and HER FATHER standing nearby, with his eyes riveted on the man he resembled so much . . the man he had walked so often-with, through the dark streets of Washington, while they talked-over great political and moral and spiritual problems! The MEMORY of that night a week or so after the assassination, when the White House carriage came to Eye Street AGAIN, and again Tom Cross stepped out. Only THIS time the old Negro knocked on the door and handed them a big box. Inside it was the President's favorite HAT . . a big beaver, which he'd worn at his Second Inauguration . . a hat which Doctor Gurley had often admired. Mrs. Lincoln had sent it over, as a GIFT, with a little

note signed "Your Broken-Hearted Mary Lincoln" . . a note saying she KNEW Abe would want his preacher-friend to HAVE the hat as a remembrance. THEN . . Emma's memory of her . . YEARS later, her brother put the hat in a museum for safe-keeping for awhile, and how, when they tried to get it OUT of the museum again, the director claimed it BELONGED to the museum . . that it had been a GIFT from Emma's brother, and so . . there was a big trial over Lincoln's beaver hat . . and a jury of twelve men said the hat should go to Emma . . and for six months she HAD the hat . . . TREASURED it . . and THEN . . there was ANOTHER trial . . and a judge said the jury had been WRONG and the hat must go BACK to the MUSEUM. The hat went back to the Museum . . was put in a glass case. Every few days (even NOW) the little old lady goes to look-at-it. Sometimes, she says, she feels as if she could BREAK that glass case and runaway with the hat . . it means that MUCH to her! MEMORIES! Emma remembers how, when she was a little girl in that house on Eye Street, a big man with a handsome uniform lived next-door. He was General Vincent, the head of the army, and he'd been WITH Abraham Lincoln that night when the President was shot. The General had a small son, just Emma's age. One day the boy came down with scarlet fever and Emma was warned to STAY AWAY from the Vincent house. But Tommie Vincent was her favorite playmate, so she DISOBEYED and SHE caught scarlet fever, and when she finally got-well she couldn't hear anything-much. She was DEAF. Today Emma laughs and says people think it's because she's so old . but it isn't that at all. She's ALWAYS been

deaf. STILL . . she's learned to read people's lips and it's FUN, because sometimes they KNOW she's deaf and say things they wouldn't say if they thought she could hear. A little old lady with memories! The memory of that house on Eye Street and how she was born in the very room where another child was born who became famous-in-fiction as Little Lord Fauntleroy. And the memory of the lady who lived across the street . . Frances Hodgson BURNETT . . who wrote the story millions of children have read . . about that English child with the lace collar and the velvet trousers. And the memory of the man who sold apples to Emma and to Lord Fauntleroy, too, and got-into-the-book, because HE was the one who persuaded the English boy with the lace collar to go back and claim his ancestral estate. And the man she and Lord Fauntleroy bought toys from . . and OLD man, who told the wide-eyed youngsters wild tales about how he'd fought his way across the ALPS, as a soldier in Napoleon's army. YES . . and the memory of the old darkey in Washington Marketplace who used to sell them butter and HIS story of what happened to him when he was a child selling newspapers on a street corner in Washington . . how Henry Clay was his best-customer. . and how, one day, the great statesman offered to show him a sight he'd never forget . . and took him off to Mount Vernon. It was the day they were disinterring the body of George Washington, for RE-burial, but the little negro news-boy didn't KNOW that. All HE knew was that he and the big statesman finally got to a tomb . . and Mister Clay told him to stand on his tiptoes and look-down. . and when he DID he saw a coffin and IN the coffin was a man in a Revolutionary War uniform . . . and Mister Clay said: "BOY, do you know who that is?"

and the boy said: "No 'sir" . . and Mister Clay said: "Well, you look at him, and remember-him ALL YOUR LIFE, because that's the body of the greatest man who ever lived . . the first President of our country . . George Washington." And the little boy looked for a LONG time and came away remembering that the man in the uniform had a big mouth and the widest forehead he'd ever seen, and he looked just like he was asleep, lying there in his handsome uniform. And when they got back to the city, the little negro boy was frightened because he suddenly remembered that he hadn't sold any papers all day . . and he'd probably get a thrashing when he got home . . but Mister Clay bought ALL the papers he WOULD have sold . . and went-off down-the-street, carrying them all under his arm, just like HE was a newsboy himself. MEMORIES of a little old lady who (even though she IS 84 and deaf) is one of the most active of people, in this most active of all cities in the world . . a little old lady whose eyes brighten when she tells her stories of long-ago . . and her eyes FLASH FIRE when she says she's got a daughter in Arkansas who's been trying to get her to go down THERE to live. She laughs. "Twenty horses couldn't get me out of WASHINGTON. There's too much here, to remember. This city is ALIVE . . alive with memories . . Washington . . Lincoln . . Henry Clay . . Little Lord Fauntleroy . . the Toy-maker who fought with Napoleon . . the negro newsboy who looked on the First President as he slept . . I shall NEVER leave Washington." And THAT is the story of Emma Curley Adams . . a LINK between the frenzy of wartime Washington today . . and the dim, dim past.

Church Where Abraham Lincoln Prayed Will Hold Memorial Services Today

Historic Pew Center of
Celebration of 125th
Anniversary

According to time-honored custom, President Roosevelt has been invited to attend the special Lincoln memorial services today in the New York Avenue Presbyterian church in Washington and occupy the pew which Lincoln occupied during his presidency.

President Hoover attended a similar service a year ago today. Coolidge did so during his term; so did Taft; so did Theodore Roosevelt; so did President McKinley. Many administrations have observed the tradition dear to the religious life of our national capital—namely, that on the Sunday nearest Lincoln's birthday the President of the United States should worship in the church where Lincoln worshipped and sit in the Lincoln pew.

This pew, roped off from the rest of the aisle, a shrine within a shrine, bears Abraham Lincoln's name on a thin, worn, silver plate. Here the sad, patient Lincoln could be found on many a Sunday during those trying years of his term, sitting near the pew door sideways, to accommodate his long legs, which otherwise would have been cramped in the narrow space.

Thus Lincoln, who—unlike most of our Presidents—never joined a church, was so closely identified with this one that Washington residents to this day fondly call it the Lincoln church.

Its chimes, among the finest in Washington, and its tower, in the Sir Christopher Wren design, were the gift in 1928 of Mrs. Robert Lincoln and her family—a memorial to Father Abraham.

An Airplane Beacon

The tower was originally designed as a beacon light for airplanes. Romance lies in this simple fact. Each night the spire is illuminated, so that from far and wide men may see this pinnacle of light shining in the darkness above the city skyline, symbolic of the spirit of Lincoln, who led the nation from darkness to light.

Washington is dotted with churches which have claimed for a term or two the honor of presidential attendance, an honor which of recent years has become—well, "a bit disrupting," to quote one minister who knows. In the olden days the President used to come and go to church as inconspicuously as any private citizen. In modern administrations, however, idle curiosity seekers, who come not to worship but to stare necessitate a special police patrol near the church which he attends. Pew holders are admitted by ticket, as though to a theater or lecture. Crowds armed with opera glasses rather than prayer books fill even the galleries. To preach in a church while the President is there is like talking to the wind. Many devout church members who prefer sober contemplation have been driven elsewhere in despair, until a change of administration brings a shift in



The Pew in Washington Church Where Lincoln Worshipped

The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church

\$800,000 BUILDING FUND

Minister

PETER MARSHALL, D.D.

WASHINGTON 5, D.C.

1313 New York Ave., N.W.

Telephone: STerling 5370

Budget and Finance Committee

Judge Samuel E. Whitaker,
Chairman

Irwin H. Bernhardt

Harry Blake

Verne C. Bonesteel

Newell W. Ellison

Neal N. Herndon

A. C. Oliphant

William F. Rogers, Jr.

Col. Gratz B. Strickler

William B. Willard

December 1, 1948

Campaign Committee

Mr. Frank Armstrong

Mrs. Frank E. Edgington

Mrs. C. O. Goodpasture

Dr. Peter Marshall

Col. Gratz B. Strickler

Mrs. A. C. Oliphant

Senator Kenneth S. Wherry

Dr. Louis Warren, Director
Lincoln Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Dr. Warren:

I believe you will be interested in reading the attached booklet "OUR CHURCH", which gives the historic background of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church and tells why we are literally crowded out of our present 90 year old edifice.

Because nine presidents of the United States have worshipped in this church and especially because the immortal Lincoln had a pew here from 1861 to 1865, we of the Church believe that your society would be especially interested in our present effort to raise funds to rebuild.

To date, \$529,412 has been pledged toward our goal of \$800,000. The amount subscribed thus far has just about exhausted the giving power of our people. They have been most generous, as their gifts well indicate.

Now, we are appealing to our friends outside the Church, especially to those who have reason to share with us our interest in restoring this historic church with its Lincoln traditions.

We would appreciate the help of your society in aiding us to continue in the heart of the nation's Capital, the glorious history of our past and the unequalled opportunities of our future.

If you would like to help us, please fill in and return the enclosed card. I feel sure you would get a blessing in having a part in this worthy venture of faith.

Very sincerely yours,

Peter Marshall

Peter Marshall

General Chairman

Judge J. Russell Leech

Vice-Chairmen

Mr. Donald B. Clement

Mr. Harry Blake

Section Chairmen

Big Gifts

Judge Samuel E. Whitaker

Mr. A. C. Oliphant

Mr. Newell W. Ellison

Special Gifts

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Mr. William B. Willard

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Chairman

Mr. Irwin H. Bernhardt

Miss Grace Goodpasture

PM:fmf



Abraham Lincoln worshipped in the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church from 1861 to 1865. His old pew is still in use every Sunday in the present 90 year old sanctuary. The Lincoln tower on the Church, the Lincoln Chapel, and the Lincoln pew form one of our national shrines.

December 23, 1948

Mr. Peter Marshall
1313 New York Avenue, North West
Washington, 5. D.C.

My dear Mr. Marshall:

We are indeed happy to know that you are contemplating rebuilding the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, and we wish we were in a position here to help you financially.

This Foundation is not an endowed institution but is supported by an annual appropriation which at no time included any provision for money gifts, so I do not see how it is possible for us to work in your excellent program.

I recall very many pleasant visits to the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church and hope to be in Washington this coming Lincoln Birthday when I may have occasion to attend some of your meetings.

Very truly yours,

LAW:KB

Director

December 17, 1944

Mr. Peter Marshall
1315 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. Marshall:

We are indeed glad to hear that you are
completing reviewing the New York Project
Contract, and we wish to express our
appreciation.

This Foundation is not an official
part of the Government, but we are
glad to include any project for which we
can help it to realize its aims in our
program.

I would very much appreciate your
action regarding this project and hope to be in
this position to meet you soon. I am
looking forward to your response.

Very truly yours,

Director

1315

E S T A B L I S H E D + 1 8 0 3



Our Church

NEW YORK AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
WASHINGTON, D. C.







To the Members and Friends of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church

The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church
Washington 3, D. C.

PETER MARSHALL
MINISTER

This brochure tells the story of a church - a church that was, a church that is, and a church that is to be. It is a story of faith and vision on the part of men and women ninety years ago, and on the part of their successors today. I am sure it will appeal to you.

Here is a mingling of romance and realism of the highest order. It is well written. You will find it interesting and challenging.

I am so confident of the validity of the appeal in these pages that I ask only your thoughtful reading of this story. I commend it to your generous response.

Very sincerely yours,

Peter Marshall



INTRODUCTION

IN THE heart of downtown Washington, its tower pointing heavenward, stands the historic New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. Every quarter hour, above the strident din of the city, its Westminster chimes ring out, reminding the busy multitudes that Christ lives and holds out a helping hand to all those who call upon Him. On Sunday long queues of people line up outside the doors seeking to worship in its sanctuary. Like a beacon light on a hilltop, this great Church continues to hold aloft the light of truth at this crossroads of the world.

It is today, however, at a crucial point in its history. Its plant, erected nearly ninety years ago, hallowed as it is with lovely memories and with much architectural beauty, is nevertheless wholly inadequate. Every Sunday hundreds of people, seeking to worship within, cannot gain admission to the sanctuary. Often many cannot find a place even in the rooms downstairs to listen to the services over the public address system.

The Sunday School is quartered in a converted store building, an architectural crazyquilt. There is not enough room to carry on adequately the activities in which our church is engaged, and no room at all to do many things that should be done.

The influence of this church and its opportunity for service to the city and the nation, we dare say, were not dreamed of by those men of faith who built our present structure. Heirs of a glorious past, we face with confidence the difficult task that has been bequeathed unto us; we cannot fail to grasp the opportunity that lies before us.



HISTORY AND TRADITIONS



WE ARE proud of the illustrious history of our Church, proud of its accomplishments during the century and a quarter of its existence, in which it has played an important part in the religious life of the city and the nation.

But, though a proud church today, we come of humble parents. The first of our parent congregations was formed in 1803, with Dr. James Laurie, a native of Scotland, as its minister. Services were held at first in the old Treasury Building. Later a building was erected on the corner of Fourteenth and F Streets. This Church, known as the F Street Church, was one of the first places for Protestant worship in Washington. Dr. Laurie served as its minister for fifty years. As the congregation was small, he worked as a clerk in the Treasury Department to help support himself.

In 1819, a number of Presbyterians, finding their church in Georgetown too distant for regular attendance, organized the Second Presbyterian Church, which met in a building on New York Avenue between Thirteenth and Fourteenth Streets.

In 1859, the F Street Church and the Second Presbyterian Church were merged to form the present New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. This Church, of about 300 members, planned and built the present structure, capable of seating more than three times their number. Our present Church is a living tribute to their faith and vision.

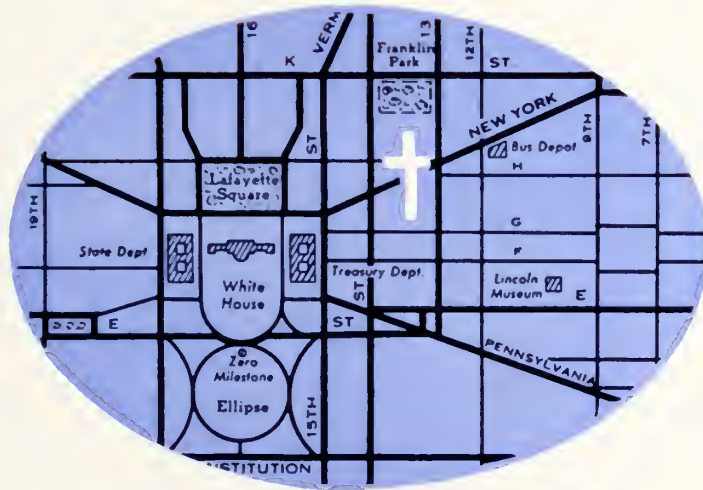
OUR CHURCH IN THE HEART OF THE NATION'S CAPITAL

Many famous people, including nine presidents of the United States, have been associated with our Church. The presidents were: John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison, James K. Polk, Franklin Pierce, James Buchanan, Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson and, before his presidency, Benjamin Harrison.

Abraham Lincoln became a regular attendant at church services soon after his inauguration, finding here great spiritual strength during the trying war years of the 1860's. Dr. Gurley, the then minister, was a warm personal friend as well as spiritual adviser of Lincoln. In the sanctuary the pew rented by Lincoln remains as it was, suitably marked.

The original tower, long a national capital landmark, was blown down in 1895, but in 1928 it was replaced by a gift from Mrs. Robert Todd Lincoln. The chimes, also given by Mrs. Lincoln, were fashioned by a firm founded by the family of Nancy Hanks, Lincoln's mother.

The chimes play an important part in the traditional opening of each Sunday service. As the hour of worship arrives, the congregation rises at the first note of the chimes and stands in silent prayer until the last stroke of the hour fades away. Then, led by the organ and the choir, all voices join in the resounding strains of the Doxology. This music overflows into four busy streets, and on occasion the chimes can be heard at the White House, just two blocks to the west, and in any of nine major hotels, which are within four blocks of our Church. Such is its strategic location.



WHERE WE HAVE EASTER CROWDS EVERY SUNDAY



Part of Congregation assembled in the Sanctuary for Sunday Services. Those unable to be seated here listen to the Services over loudspeakers in other rooms.

OUR MEMBERS

FROM the 300 who built our present Church in 1859, our membership has continually increased until we now have about 2,000 members and contributors.

Some represent families who have belonged to our Church for generations, others comparative new-comers; altogether they are a comprehensive cross-section of those who help administer the government, business and professional affairs of the city and nation.

OUR CHURCH IN THE HEART OF THE NATION'S CAPITAL



Combined Choir and Chorus.



Men's Bible Class in a corner of the Sanctuary.



Church

Staff



Women's Bible Class, in Lincoln Chapel.



Re-prints of Dr. Marshall's Sermons in great demand.



Hundreds wait each Sunday



for admission to the Sanctuary.

WHERE WE HAVE EASTER CROWDS EVERY SUNDAY

OUR VISITORS



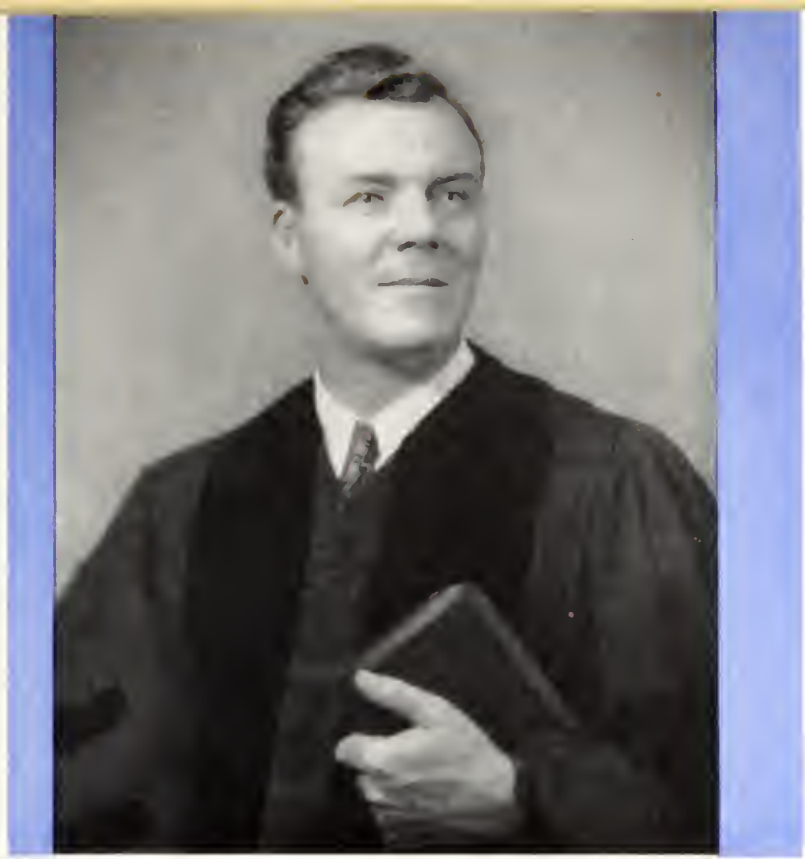
UR Church is most unusual for the number of visitors who worship with us each Sunday. The number is so great that our requirements and responsibilities are almost doubled by their participation. This magnifies the challenge we face.

Our visitors come from every corner of the nation and from many foreign lands. We minister not only to the people of Washington but to the Nation at large.




The Young People's Sunday evening supper.

OUR CHURCH IN THE HEART OF THE NATION'S CAPITAL



Peter Marshall, D. D.

OUR MINISTER

 UR Church has been blessed in the ministers who have served it. In its long history there have been only eight; all have been eminent men. None has exercised a greater influence on the religious life of the city and the nation than our present minister, Dr. Peter Marshall. He is recognized as one of the great preachers of our day. As Chaplain of the United States Senate, he has won a nation-wide reputation for the beauty and the inspiration of his prayers. One cannot hear him preach without knowing that he is a man who lives in happy association with his Lord. His sermons, and the lovely and inspiring music of the organ and the choir, draw thousands to our doors. Within they enjoy an atmosphere of sanctity and peace. They leave refreshed and lifted up.

WHERE WE HEAR INSPIRED PREACHING EVERY SUNDAY

OUR NEEDS



OUR greatest need is to provide room for those who seek to worship with us. The present building is not only inadequate, it is also obsolete. It does not conform to modern structural standards. It has been agreed that it would be impracticable to remodel it. It is imperative that it be replaced by an entirely new building.

Our bulging Sunday School is crowded into space that is not big enough for half its number. The boys and girls, and the young adults are forced to occupy a hodge-podge of rooms, many of which are not only too small, but are also located either in converted storerooms or across the street in a former hospital building.

Recreational and social activities, so essential to a well-rounded church program, have greatly suffered as a result of insufficient space.

The urgency of providing for these needs cannot be too strongly stressed; however, there are other needs of importance to our Church program.

We must have room to permit our young people to realize their aim of bringing in the underprivileged children of the section in which our Church is located and training them in Christian education, in the arts and crafts, and providing for them wholesome recreation.

We must have larger Church offices, equipped to care for increased administrative needs.

We must have a new, modern heating plant, and some air-conditioning.



Small Nursery Room.



Junior Class in the Music Library.



A Primary Sunday School Class



Children of the Community Program.



Young People's Bible Class and Edgington Bible Class in old hospital building.

WHERE WE HAVE EASTER CROWDS EVERY SUNDAY

PAST EFFORTS



UR members have long recognized the inadequacy of our plant. In 1928 the store building directly west of the main Church was purchased, and has since been used for Church activities.

In 1931, an additional 25 feet of now vacant property extending from New York Avenue to H Street, adjoining the converted store building to the west, was purchased in anticipation of the day when we could enlarge our quarters. This has since been leased until such time as it could be used for the erection of a new building.

Repairs and alterations have been made in a constant effort to meet the need for increased facilities. For many years the congregation has generously contributed to the cost of these purchases and improvements, and at Christmas-time 1943 a most generous gift from a member of our Church wiped out the balance of the debt thus incurred.

By 1944 a plan for remodeling and reconstruction was developed. Our members contributed \$175,000 toward this project, despite their recognition that actual construction would, of necessity, be delayed at least until after the war. It soon became apparent, however, that the cost of remodeling would be excessive and uneconomical, neither would it give the necessary plant. The conviction grew that only a new building would suffice.

PRESENT BUILDING PLANS

TWO years ago the congregation appointed a Building Planning Committee to analyze our situation and suggest ways and means of meeting the need for additional facilities. This committee was composed of Judge J. Russell Leech, Chairman; Donald B. Clement, Vice-Chairman; and Messrs. Harry Blake, Verne C. Bonesteel, A. C. Oliphant, Hugh Stewart Smith, Charles A. Stott, Col. Gratz B. Strickler, and Thomas P. Wharton. Judge Leech has since retired as Chairman and has been succeeded by Mr. Clement.

The Committee began by meeting with representatives of each department of the Church in order to determine its particular needs. After a careful study had been made, an architect was employed to make a survey and to recommend the best and most economical utilization of our property to satisfy the needs. After nearly two years of study and consultation with the architect and others the Committee presented detailed recommendations to members of the Church. Two congregational meetings were held to allow comprehensive explanations and full discussion. Finally, with only two dissenting, the congregation voted to approve the plans, which called for an entirely new Church building.



Joseph A. Parks.

*Artist's conception
of the proposed
New York Avenue
Presbyterian Church*



THE following description envisions the new structure:

- Location:* All of the present site, at the junction of H Street and New York Avenue, between 13th and 14th Streets, will be completely used.
- Appearance:* The character and dignity of the present building and sanctuary will be preserved, consistent with necessary architectural changes.
The tower, in general, will follow the lines of the present one, proportioned to the larger building.
- Size:* The new structure will contain about twice as many square feet of floor space as the present building.
- Floors:* Six floors instead of four, including basement.
- Sanctuary:* Will accommodate, including balcony, approximately 1500 people, or as many as now fill the sanctuary, the assembly room and the Lincoln room, the latter of which are connected only by the loud-speaker system.
- Sunday School:* Greatly enlarged, will contain:
 Beginners Department—ground floor
 Church Nursery—main floor
 Classrooms for 2-year olds—main floor
 Two Primary Classrooms—balcony floor
 Classroom for 3-year olds—balcony floor
 Three Intermediate Classrooms—top floor
 Three Junior Classrooms—top floor
 Three Adult Classrooms—top floor
 Intermediate Assembly—top floor
- Lincoln Chapel:* Slightly enlarged; will remain on ground floor.
- Church Parlor:* Will be enlarged and remain on ground floor.
- Children's Chapel:* This is a new feature that will be placed on the top floor.
- Lecture Rooms:* An enlarged assembly room on ground floor; will accommodate 400, compared with present capacity of 250.
- Dining Facilities:* A dining room to seat 400 at tables, or almost 600 without tables will be on the top floor, with an adjacent kitchen.
 A small dining room seating about 50 on the ground floor, with an adjacent kitchen.
- Community and Recreation Rooms:* Will occupy nearly 4,000 square feet in the basement.
- Church Offices:* An enlarged minister's study, private offices for the minister's secretary, the assistant minister, the director of religious education and the financial secretary, the latter office to include a vault; also a general administrative office.
- Music Department:* A choir room, a music director's office, an organist's office and a music library.
- Rest Room and Storage Facilities:* On every floor.
- Elevators:* Two elevators, to operate from the ground to the top floor.
- Heating and Air-conditioning:* Adequate heating and some air-conditioning facilities.

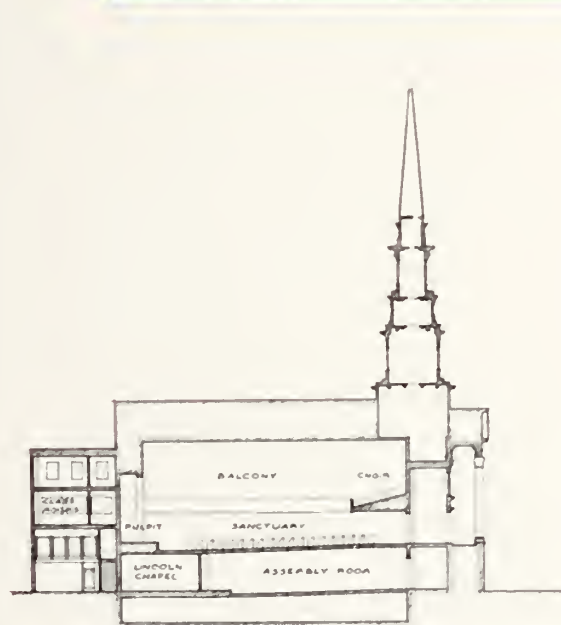
OUR CHURCH IN THE HEART OF THE NATION'S CAPITAL

THE COST AND PLANS TO FINANCE IT

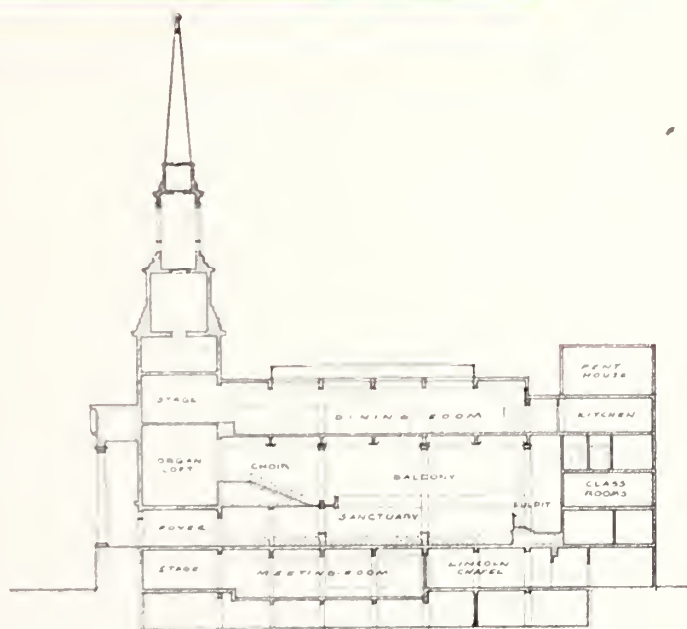
THE construction cost of the new church will amount to approximately \$800,000 according to recent estimates. The additional cost of new furnishings will probably amount to at least another \$50,000. These figures are the best available estimates.

A Budget and Finance Committee has been appointed to plan and direct a campaign to raise the \$800,000. This Committee is composed of Judge Samuel E. Whitaker, Chairman; A. C. Oliphant, Vice-Chairman; Messrs. Irwin H. Bernhardt, Harry Blake, Verne C. Bonesteel, Newell W. Ellison, Neal N. Herndon, William F. Rogers, Jr., Col. Gratz B. Strickler, and William B. Willard.

The \$175,000 previously mentioned as contributed in 1945 for alterations and rehabilitation of the Church is a substantial beginning toward the total \$800,000 Building Fund. This leaves a balance of \$625,000 to be



EXISTING BUILDING



PROPOSED BUILDING

WHERE WE HAVE EASTER CROWDS EVERY SUNDAY

obtained. A substantial part of the sum needed for the new construction could be borrowed, since our Church is free of debt and our land has an estimated value of \$400,000, but it is agreed that the estimated future revenue of the Church would make it quite unwise to borrow more than \$250,000. It is hoped that it will not be necessary to borrow any amount.

An intensive Building Fund campaign will be conducted, during the Fall of 1948, for the balance of the \$800,000. Plans are being made to contact as many of the members and friends of the Church as possible during this time.

New subscriptions to the Building Fund Program will be added to previous building fund gifts so that donors will be credited with the total of all their gifts to the building fund. For example, a person who gave \$500 to the previous remodeling campaign, and who subscribes \$2,500 in this new appeal, will be credited with a total gift of \$3,000 to the Building Fund Program.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GENEROUS GIFTS

IT IS obvious that most of the \$800,000 must be provided by the active members of our Church. This means that all of us must give, and give most liberally.



Proposed for the Minister's Study

OUR CHURCH IN THE HEART OF THE NATION'S CAPITAL

Many of the friends of our Church who worship with us, but are not members, will be sincerely interested in the success of this effort and can be depended upon to contribute, but the major responsibility is ours.

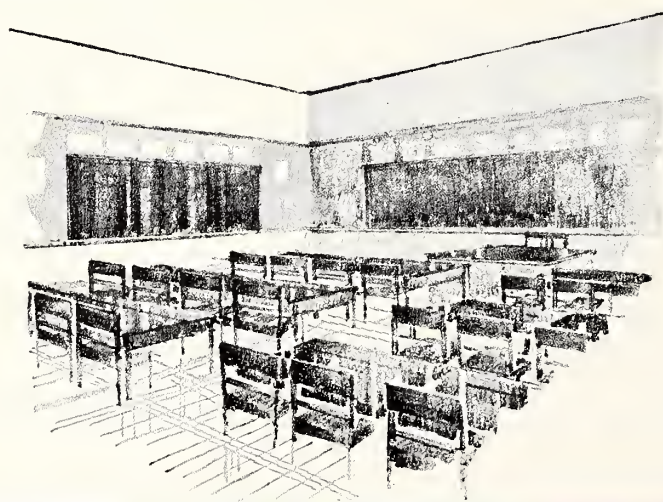
Looking at the situation squarely there is set out below a statement of the gifts which will be required to attain the total objective of \$800,000, as computed by the Wells Organizations, which is directing our Building Fund Program.

	<i>Number of Gifts</i>	<i>Amount of Each</i>	<i>Totals</i>
<i>Big Gifts</i>	1	\$50,000	\$50,000
	1	35,000	35,000
	1	25,000	25,000
	1	20,000	20,000
	2	15,000	30,000
	6		\$160,000
	1	\$12,500	\$12,500
	5	10,000	50,000
	1	8,000	8,000
	1	7,500	7,500
	2	6,000	12,000
	14	5,000	70,000
	24		160,000
	10	\$4,000	\$40,000
<i>Special Gifts</i>	15	3,000	45,000
	10	2,500	25,000
	25	2,000	50,000
	60		160,000
	25	\$1,560	\$39,000
	50	1,092	54,600
	50	780	39,000
	30	624	18,720
	16	546	8,680
	171		160,000
<i>Members and Non-Members</i>	50	\$ 468	\$23,400
	40	390	15,700
	200	312	62,400
	50	234	11,700
	300	156	46,800
	640		\$160,000
	901		\$800,000

Because the need for extremely generous gifts is so great, it is recommended that all donors pay their Building Fund subscriptions during the next three years in weekly, monthly or quarterly payments, beginning on or before January 2, 1949.

<i>On a Three Year Basis</i>	
<i>Weekly Payment</i>	<i>Total Gift</i>
\$10.00	\$1,560.00
7.00	1,092.00
5.00	780.00
4.00	624.00
3.50	546.00
3.00	468.00
2.50	390.00
2.00	312.00
1.50	234.00
1.00	156.00

All who subscribe total amounts of less than \$1,600 are encouraged to use weekly payments. Special weekly offering envelopes with a third "Building Fund" section have been ordered for this purpose. The following chart shows weekly payments of various sizes and what they amount to in the three year subscription period.



A Typical Junior Classroom

OUR CHURCH IN THE HEART OF THE NATION'S CAPITAL

Those who make total gifts of \$1,600 or more are encouraged to make their subscriptions payable monthly or quarterly during the three year collection period.

Some monthly and quarterly payments on total gifts of \$2,000 to \$50,000 are computed below:



For the Primary Department

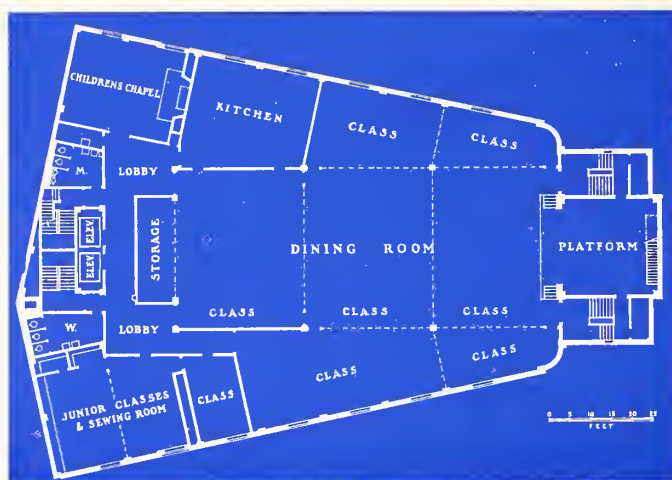
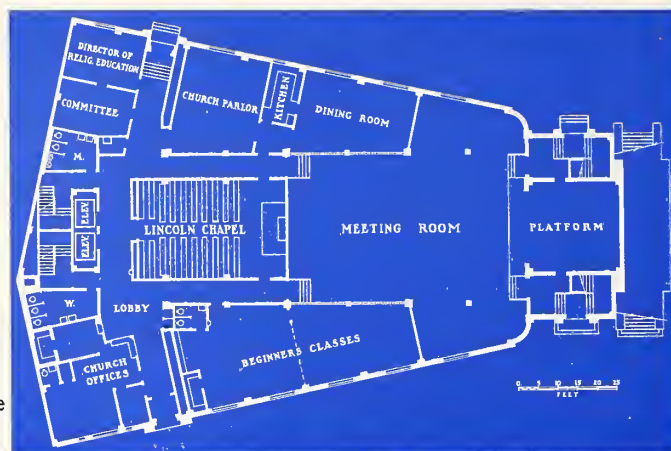
<i>36 Monthly Payments</i>	<i>12 Quarterly Payments</i>	<i>Total Gift</i>
\$55.00	\$ 166.00	\$2,000.00
83.00	250.00	3,000.00
111.00	333.00	4,000.00
138.00	416.00	5,000.00
277.00	833.00	10,000.00
555.00	1,666.00	20,000.00
694.00	2,083.00	25,000.00
972.00	2,916.00	35,000.00
1,389.00	4,167.00	50,000.00

MEMORIAL OPPORTUNITIES

THE New York Avenue Presbyterian Church Building Fund affords an excellent opportunity for those who desire to honor a family name or perpetuate the memory of a loved one.

Suitably inscribed tablets will be used to designate rooms and facilities as memorials.

Plans for the
Ground floor



Plans for the
Fourth floor

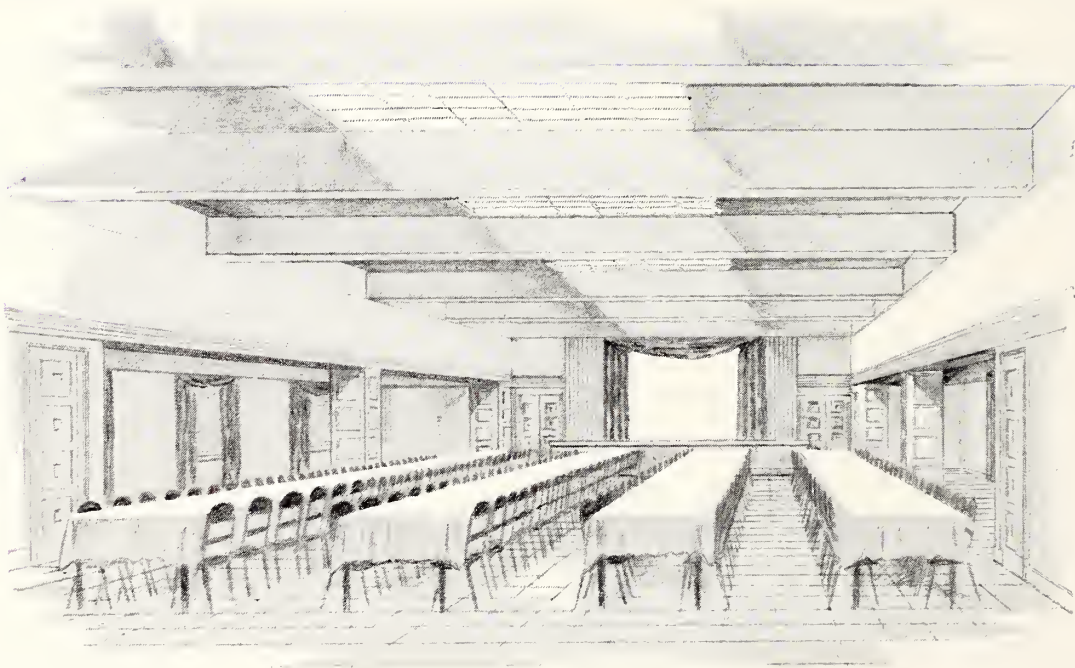
OUR CHURCH IN THE HEART OF THE NATION'S CAPITAL

A list of
typical memorial
opportunities:

Tower	\$50,000
Dining Room	35,000
Assembly Room	25,000
Lincoln Chapel	20,000
Minister's Study	15,000
Children's Chapel	15,000
Church Parlor	12,500
Church Offices	10,000
Music Department	10,000
Small Dining Room	10,000
Two Elevators (each)	10,000
Basement Community Room	8,000
Complete Kitchen	7,500
Small Kitchen	6,000
Nursery Room	6,000
Classrooms (14) each	5,000

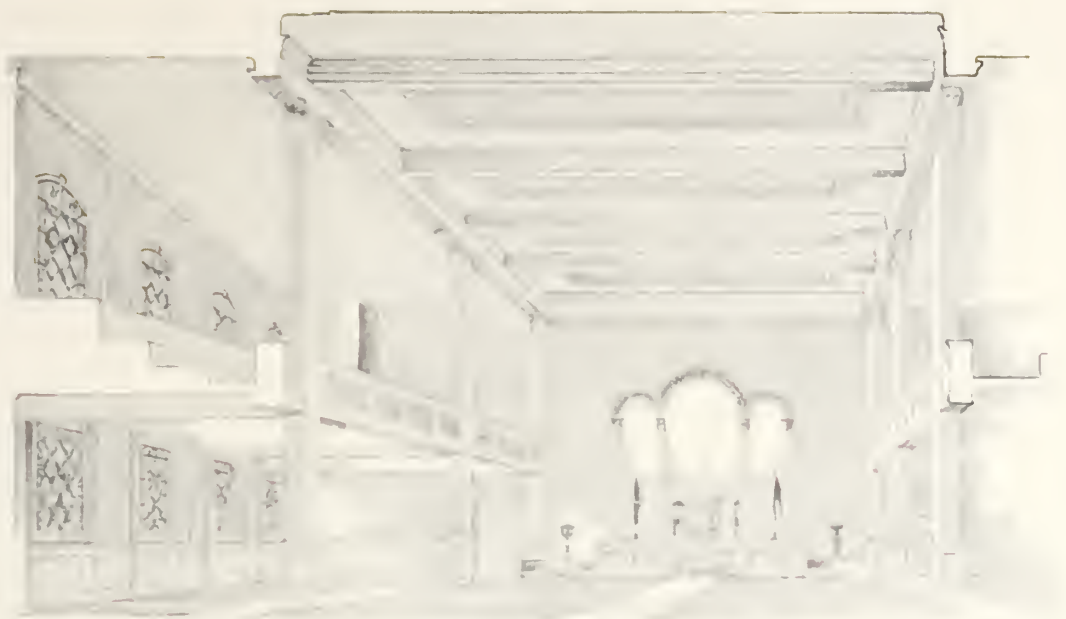
GIFTS AND INCOME TAXES

BECAUSE gifts to the Building Fund are deductible for income tax purposes many donors, especially those giving larger amounts, may wish to subscribe for a first payment during this 1948 calendar year and for a final payment early in 1952 which will allow them to spread the income tax advantage over five calendar years.



Artist's conception of proposed Dining Room.

OUR CHURCH IN THE HEART OF THE NATION'S CAPITAL



Architects working drawing of the Sanctuary.

THE CHALLENGE

*I*T IS plain to see that to raise the amount needed we must give as we have never given before. The balance needed for the Building Fund is about four times the amount raised for building purposes in 1945. It is twice the amount given over a three-year period for current expenses and benevolence.

Indeed, the goal seems very large but it must be reached. We are faced with necessity. The job is to be done. It is squarely up to us to do it.

We shall accomplish our goal by faith—faith in our project, faith in ourselves. We must succeed. The world never needed Christ more than it does today. Only by living and acting as He urged us to live and act can the world be saved from another holocaust which can only end in victory for none and in chaos for all.

Christianity today is faced not only by the indifference of some but by open and defiant opposition.

Not one step can Christians afford to retreat.

Our Church is but a small part of Christianity, but it is a vital part. It occupies a segment of the front line of the Christian forces. It is in the heart of the capital of the foremost Christian nation of today. It must carry on. It must improve its position. It must be ready to surge forth as a militant leader of the forces of freedom and justice, and then to help to lead all men and nations into the way of brotherhood and peace.

We cannot do it alone, but Christ can not do it without us. Such being the challenge we must succeed.

Let every man do his utmost and God will do the rest. But, be assured, God steps in only when we have done all we can do.

The responsibility is on all of us; it is on each one of us. No one of us can fail to carry his full share of the load. And, God helping us, we will do it.

GOD BUILDS NO CHURCHES



God builds no churches. By his plan
That labor has been left to man.
No spires miraculously arise;
No little mission from the skies
Falls on the bleak and barren place
To be a source of strength and grace.
The humblest church demands its price
In human toil and sacrifice.

Men call the Church the House of God,
Toward which the toil-stained pilgrims trod
In search of strength and rest and hope,
As blindly through life's mists they grope.
And there God dwells, but it is man
Who builds that house and draws its plan;
Pays for mortar and the stone,
That none need seek for God alone.

The humblest spire in mortal ken
Where God abides was built by men.
And if the church is still to grow,
Is still the light of hope to throw
Across the valley of despair,
Men still must build God's house of prayer.
God sends no churches from the skies.
Out of our hearts must they arise.

—EDGAR GUEST.

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CHURCH OFFICE: 1311 New York Avenue, N. W.

Telephone: NATIONAL 0175

Hours: 9-5 Tuesday through Friday; 9-1 Saturday. Closed Monday.

This church is affiliated with the Washington Federation of Churches
The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

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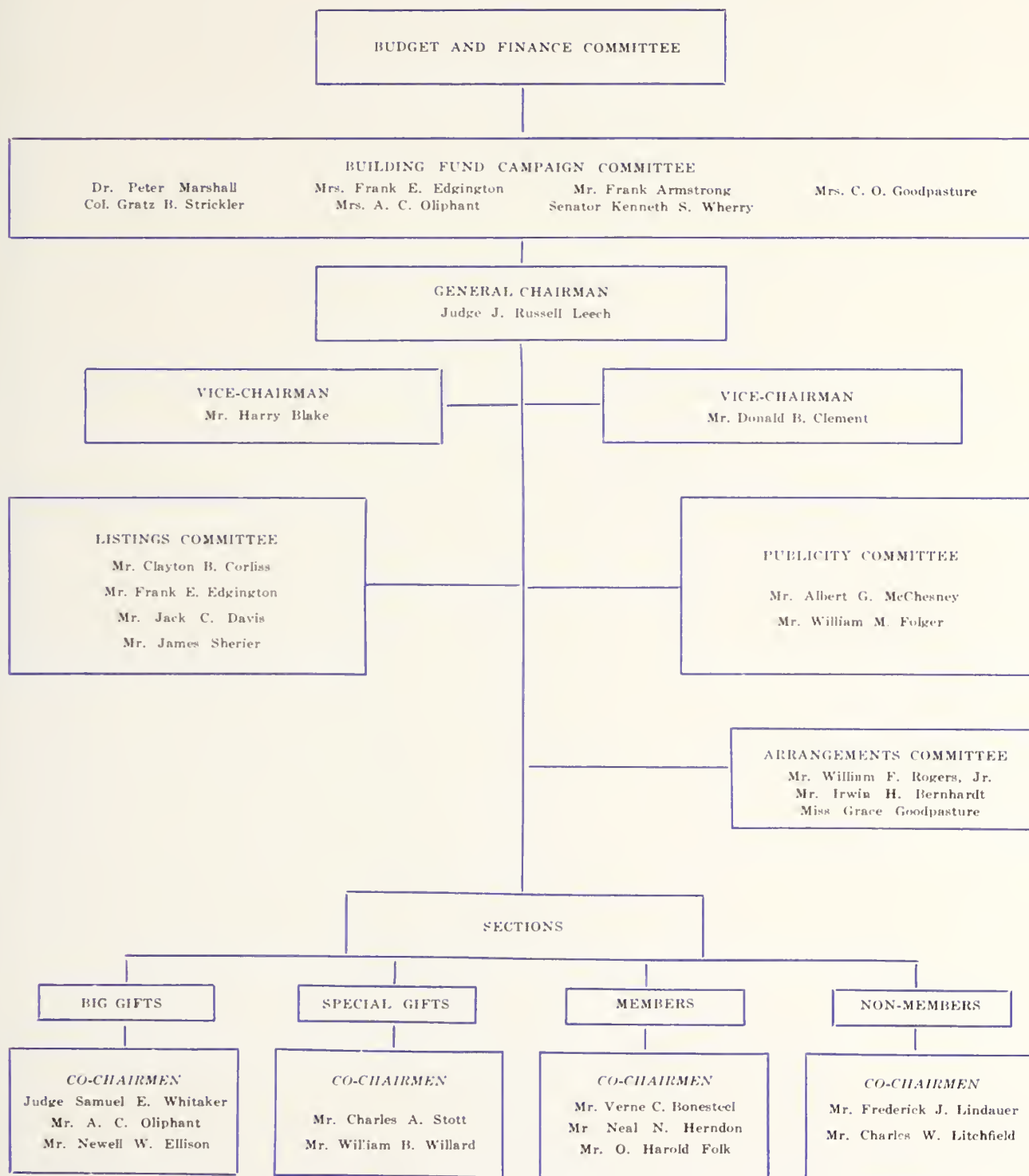
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ORGANIZATION DIAGRAM

New York Avenue Presbyterian Church Building Fund





Churches You Should Know

By **Herna Clark and Lora Clark Gossard**

IN THE nation's capital there are many beautiful and interesting churches, but only the one whose story is presented today is associated with the name of Abraham Lincoln. This is the New York Avenue Presbyterian church, where Lincoln worshipped when he was president. It is sometimes called "The Presidents' Church," because so many chief executives have attended services here, beginning with John Quincy Adams, who, from its pulpit delivered a farewell address to Marquis Lafayette, as the great Frenchman, idolized here, left America after his visit to us in 1825.

Bluff old Andrew Jackson was an attendant in his time, as were William Henry Harrison and his grandson-president, Benjamin Harrison. Other presidents claimed by this old church are James Buchanan, Andrew Johnson, Millard Fillmore, Grover Cleveland, and at times Theodore Roosevelt.

But it is as the church of Abraham Lincoln that it is best known. The pew in which he sat is visited by thousands every year and is called "A shrine within a shrine." Standing in this pew, Theodore Roosevelt, then president of the United States, delivered the principal address, when



New York Ave. Presbyterian Church

in 1907 the old church celebrated its centennial anniversary.

There is no better shrine in the church, a small room on the first floor where President Lincoln came, in his deep anxiety, during the dark days of the civil war, to sit in silence, with the door open into the prayer meeting room where the congregation was gathered. Here in darkness, his presence unfolded to any but the minister, Dr. Phileas D. Gaitley, and the secret service men who guarded him, the sad President

joined his prayers with those of the congregation in the larger room and found strength and comfort. This small room is now a chapel, where small weddings and christenings are held.

• • • • •
The church has a history which goes back almost a century and a half. It was organized during Jefferson's administration by a group of Scotch-Irish Americans who had fought in the Revolution and now had come to live in the Nation's capital. At first, the little congregation met in the Treasury building, and its first minister, the good Dr. James Lowrie, earned his living by working as a treasury clerk, since his ministerial salary did not suffice for his needs. But soon the congregation began to grow and there was money enough to build a small brick church. The

cornerstone of the present church was laid in 1820.

When, in 1928 the church celebrated its 125th anniversary, the family of Robert Todd Lincoln presented to it a beautiful memorial tower, with chimes, whose bells were cast in a foundry which Lincoln's mother's family [the Hanks family] started.

The church has had only nine ministers in all its history, the Rev. Dr. Peter Marshall, who recently died, having been chaplain of the senate. His death left a vacancy which has just been filled by calling a Scotsman, the Rev. G. M. Docherty of Aberdeen, to the pulpit.

As the visitor to Washington hears the chimes ring out over the city, he seems to feel that Lincoln is speaking in their music a message of peace and good will.

President at Lincoln Church Ceremony



PRESIDENT EISENHOWER watches as BARNEY BALABAN, the donor, unveils Lincoln manuscript—the first draft of proposal leading to the Emancipation Proclamation—at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington.

Eisenhowers Present at Unveiling Of Lincoln Emancipation Draft

They Use Civil War President's Pew at Dedication of Handwritten Manuscript in Washington Church.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 9 (AP)—President and Mrs. Eisenhower yesterday witnessed the unveiling of the original manuscript of the first draft of Abraham Lincoln's emancipation proclamation.

They attended the early service at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church and then went to the church's Lincoln room where the Rev. George M. Docherty dedicated Lincoln's handwritten draft of his first proposal to do away with slavery.

The manuscript was given to the church by Barney Balaban, president of Paramount Pictures.

The manuscript was written by Lincoln in the form of a proposed congressional bill and read to his Cabinet on July 14, 1862. It starts out in clearly readable script:

"Fellow citizens of the Senate, and House of Representatives (:) "

"Herewith is the draft of a bill to compensate any state which may abolish slavery within its

limits, the passage of which, substantially as presented, I respectfully, and earnestly recommend. (Signed) Abraham Lincoln."

Lincoln and his Cabinet decided to hold the measure until it could be backed up by the Union armies. When the tide of battle changed a few weeks later Lincoln issued, on Sept. 22, a proclamation of emancipation telling the Confederate states that, if they did not return to the Union by Jan. 1, 1863, he would issue a second proclamation declaring the slaves in those states to be "forever free." On Jan. 1 he issued the second and final proclamation of emancipation.

The Eisenhowers joined another church, the National Presbyterian, last Sunday, but attended the New York Avenue church yesterday because of the Lincoln ceremonies. They occupied the pew in which President Lincoln sat when he attended services during his Administration.

N. Y. Avenue Church Is Dedicated

Amid historic relics of its most distinguished parishioner, Abraham Lincoln, the New York Avenue Presbyterian church was dedicated before a congregation of more than 1,000 persons last night.

While a choir intoned the ancient hymn, "Ye Gates, Lift Up Your Heads on High," the age-old ceremony of turning over the key to the city's newest church took place at the church door.

After the ceremony, Barney Balaban, a motion picture executive whose parents immigrated to the United States by steerage, presented a priceless Lincoln document to the board of trustees.

Periodical Award Set Up

Handing over the first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation, Balaban announced he was setting up a periodical award for "outstanding service in translating the spirit" of the proclamation into "our way of life."

Said Balaban:

"To use Lincoln's words, the world today is half slave and half free. Once again human dignity is being challenged and repudiated. Freedom or slavery has again become the burning issue of our times."

Dr. George M. Docherty, pastor of the church, who received the document for the parish, presided for the first time at rites in the church to which he was called from Scotland nearly two years ago.

The Rev. Harrison Ray Anderson, moderator of the Presbyterian general assembly and minister of the Fourth Presbyterian church of Chicago, delivered the inaugural sermon.

He enjoined the congregation never to close the "door of sanctuary" offered by the church.

"The gates of hell," said Rev. Anderson, "shall not prevail while the gates of sanctuary are open."

Comparison to Bride

Dr. Docherty, in a short address, told the congregation that, like the traditional bride, the church had "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue."

The new church, he said, retains the old pew from which Lincoln worshiped. The building is completely new and modern in facilities and structure. It borrowed from the old Presbyterian meeting house the location of the sanctuary on the second floor. In

Dedicated On N. Y. Avenue

[Continued from first page]

addition, he pointed out that the walls were pastel blue in color.

Introducing Balaban after the dedication service, Dr. Docherty said the value of the Lincoln document is that it "lays down that the supreme value of the world is human personality.

"Man, in the words of Immanuel Kant, is an end in himself and must never be used as a means toward an end," he said.

"This document . . . carries with it the implication of the final emancipation of the individual from any tyranny or any form of slavery in the world today.

"As such, speaking from the point of view of the preacher, it is the text from which the principles of freedom must be preached."

Brought 'Lot of Courage'

Balaban, calling it "the American story," said his parents had come to this country about 70 years ago "with nothing but the clothes on their backs and an awful lot of courage."

"In one generation," said Balaban, "the Balabans moved from the steerage to a seat of honor in Lincoln's pew of this church."

Balaban said it was this "miracle of America" that impelled him to buy the document and present it to the church as a symbol of gratitude.

Alluding to Lincoln's remark that the world was "half slave and half free," Balaban said:

"Once again, human dignity is being challenged and repudiated. Forces of evil, scoring in all the moral precepts which we hold dear, seek to enslave the minds and hearts of men everywhere.

Urges 'Eternal Vigilance'

"Freedom or slavery has become the burning issue of our times."

Urging "eternal vigilance" to preserve liberty, Balaban added:

"Nor can we ever rest content that we have attained the fullest measure of human dignity even here, on the free soil of America. Men of good will must still endeavor to translate the underlying spirit of the Emancipation into everyday practice."

Balaban said he hoped the awards from the trust fund he envisaged could be made at the church on occasions associated with Lincoln's birthday.

He added the hope that the presentation of the document would be "an affirmative step to rekindle the spiritual flame that inspired its author."

Rabbi Norman Gerstenfeld of



Outside, a few pedestrians paused on rain-swept streets as the bells in the familiar clock tower pealed thru the misty air.

the Washington Hebrew congregation, who suggested the gift to Balaban, unveiled the Lincoln document on an easel at the front of the church.

Acceptance of the document was made by Abner Chambers Oliphant, president of the church's board of trustees.

He said the church would keep it accessible to the public, probably in the Lincoln chapel, and try to "make it the basis for extension of the principle of liberty and the freedom crusade among free people."

Dr. Joseph R. Sizoo, former minister of the church and now president of the New Brunswick (N.J.) Theological seminary, was

unable to be present because of the death of his sister.

Other participants in the services were the Rev. C. Stewart McKenzie, moderator of the Washington presbytery and minister of the Western Presbyterian church here; the Revs. Robert T. Bridge and James D. Bryden, assistant ministers of the New York Avenue church; George Shirley Dodson, sexton, and Masters James Marshall Whitney and Peter John Marshall, members of the church school.

Marshall is son of the late Rev. Peter Marshall, former pastor of the church and Senate chaplain three years until his death in 1949.

The new church, in colonial style, replaces the one that stood

was razed to make way for the new edifice early last year.

Floor space in the new church is double that of the old. The new sanctuary will accommodate about 1,400 persons.

With St. John's Episcopal church, about three blocks to the west, the New York Avenue Presbyterian church shares the name, "Church of the Presidents." Ten of the 15 Presbyterian Presidents who occupied the White House worshipped in its old building.

The church is, however, strongly associated with Abraham Lincoln. The public knew the structure for a long time as "The Lincoln Church."

Ritual Begins Outdoors

The impressive ritual started outside in the pouring rain, before the massive front door.

There, Rev. Anderson knocked heavily three times and said:

"Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord."

The door was then opened from within by Oliphant, who turned over the keys to Dr. Docherty, one of the officials accompanying Rev. Anderson.

Party Moves Down Aisle

After ceremony, the Processional was sounded by the organ. 70 men and women in the choir added their voices and the entire party moved down the central aisle.

The famous Westminster chimes, given to the old church by Mrs. Todd Lincoln, struck eight, and the Doxology was intoned.

Call to worship, prayers and Scripture readings led up to the act of dedication.



[Times-Herald Staff Photo]

This was the scene inside the New York Avenue Presbyterian church as a thankful congregation of more than 1,000 persons last night joined in dedication services. A few minutes before, while the

choir (upper right) intoned the ancient hymn, "Ye Gates, Lift Up Your Heads on High," the age-old ceremony of turning over the key to the city's newest church had taken place at the door.

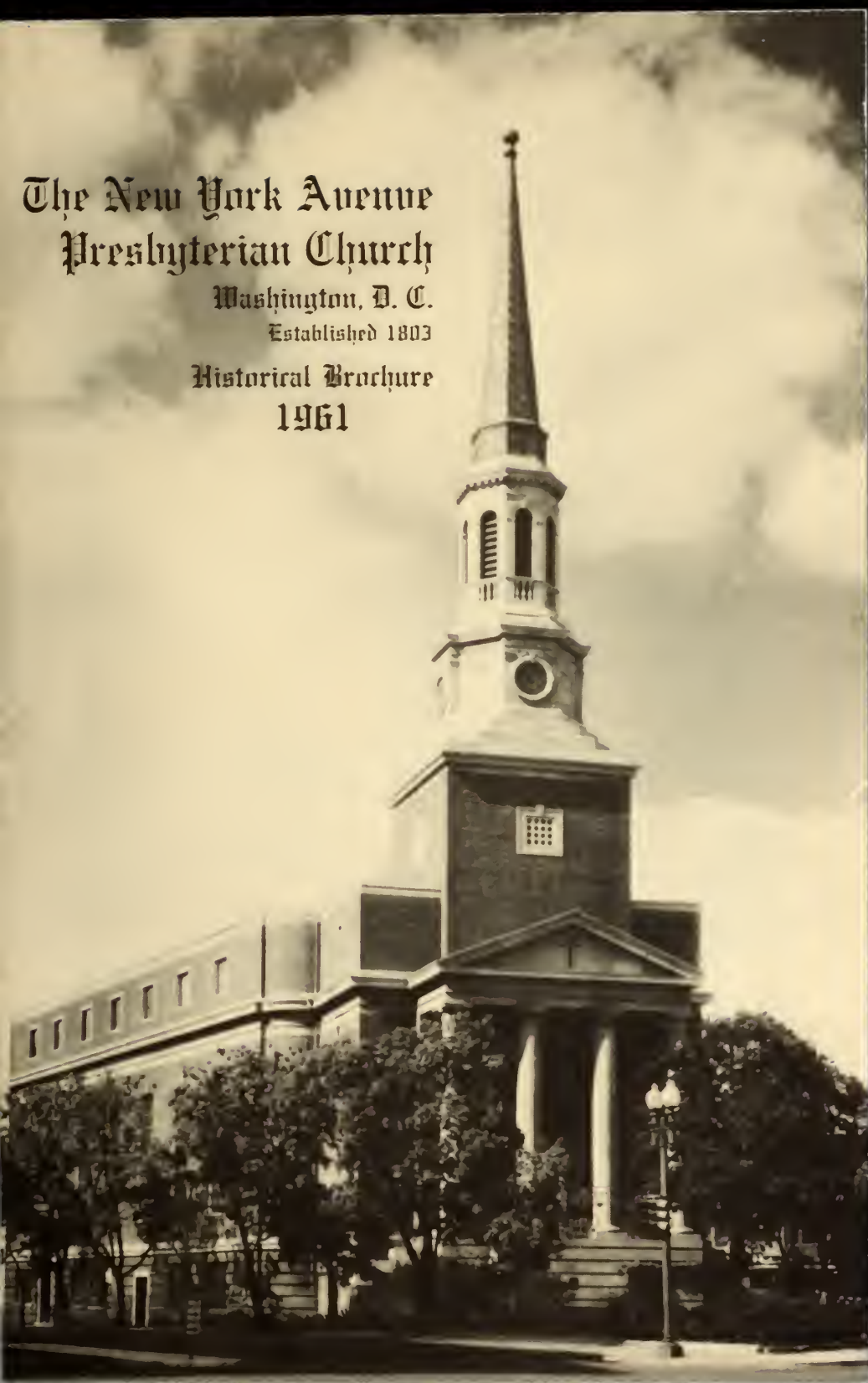
The New York Avenue
Presbyterian Church

Washington, D. C.

Established 1803

Historical Brochure

1961



Welcome



George M. Docherty
Minister, 1950-

THE NEW YORK AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH is always privileged to welcome guests from across the nation and from countries throughout the world. This little brochure is published in the hope that it may preserve for our friends the memory of their visit. May those who read it, when they return home, recall a time of worship in our capital, when together all differences were united in common prayer and praise, and all to the Glory of God.

George M. Docherty

Minister



DR. PETER MARSHALL, Minister 1937-49, was born in Scotland in 1902. He came to the United States in 1927 and was a graduate of Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia, in 1931. His sermons were an inspiration to thousands who heard him preach at New York Avenue or who later read his words in printed form. As Chaplain of the Senate, 1947-49, Dr. Marshall was noted for his vital, courageous prayers. He died on January 25, 1949, and is buried at Fort Lincoln Cemetery, D. C.

DR. JOSEPH R. SIZOO, Minister 1924-1936, came to the United States from The Netherlands as a small boy. A graduate of the Dutch Reformed Seminary, New Brunswick, N. J., he later served as its President, 1947-52. Under the distinguished leadership of Dr. Sizoo, who had earlier served as a missionary to India and as a World War I chaplain, New York Avenue grew both in membership and attendance. Dr. Sizoo is now Milbank Professor of Religion at George Washington University, Washington, D. C.



Our History

OUR CHURCH TRACES its beginnings to a little group of Scottish stone masons in the early 1790's who gathered together for worship in a carpenter's shop, temporarily erected on the grounds of the White House during its construction.

In 1803 this group called Dr. James Laurie from Scotland to be the first pastor of the newly formed Associate Reformed Church of F Street. A building was erected in 1807 at the corner of 14th and F Streets, where the Willard Hotel now stands. This was the first building erected in the city of Washington for Protestant worship, and it became known as the F Street Church.

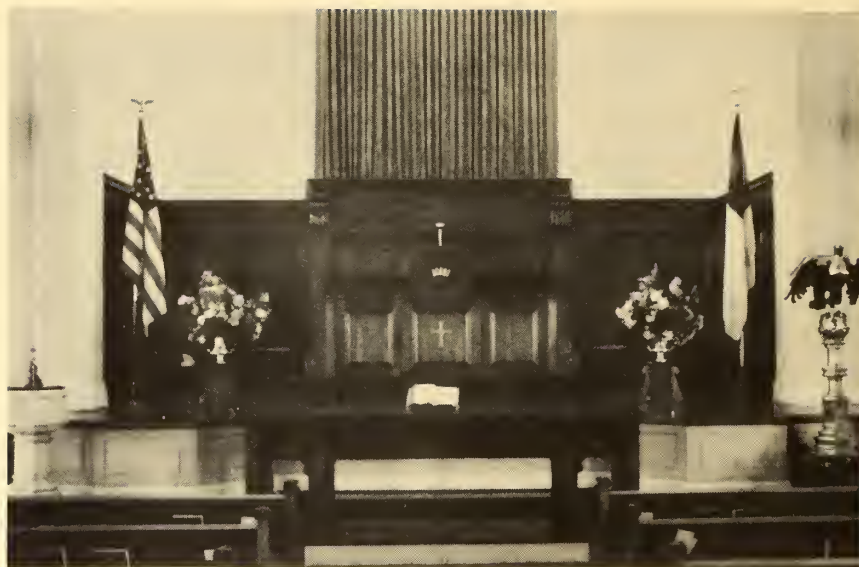
In 1819 a group of some 16 families from the Bridge Street Presbyterian Church in Georgetown—a separate township from Washington at that time—found their church too distant for regular attendance and organized the Second Presbyterian Church. They met in a building on New York Avenue between 13th and 14th Streets, in approximately the same location as that of our present church.



*The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church
1859 - 1950*

In 1859 the F Street Church and the Second Presbyterian Church united to form the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. Pastor of the united church was Dr. Phineas D. Gurley, who had been called to the F Street Church following Dr. Laurie's death in 1853. The new church building was built in 1859-60 with a vision for the future, for although the membership of the united church stood at 291, the new sanctuary (including the gallery, added later) accommodated more than three times that number.

Nine Presidents of the United States have been associated with our church: John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison, James K. Polk, Franklin Pierce, James Buchanan, Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson and, before his presidency, Benjamin Harrison. It is, however, with the name of President Lincoln that the church is most closely associated, and it is because of this that the church has become known as "The Lincoln Church." A warm friendship developed between Mr. Lincoln and Dr. Gurley during the Civil War period. Shortly after the President was shot, Dr. Gurley was called to his side, and he later conducted his funeral in the East Room of the White House.



Chancel in the Sanctuary

In 1948 the congregation of New York Avenue made the historic decision to raze the old church and to construct a larger building on the same site. The structural condition of the 1859 church did not permit enlarging it and retaining the old sanctuary. The last service in the former church, was held on January 31, 1950.

The cornerstone of the present church building was laid on April 3, 1951, by President Harry S. Truman, and the new structure was dedicated on December 20th of the same year. It has colonial architectural lines, and the location of the sanctuary on the second floor is reminiscent of the old Presbyterian meetinghouse style.

Floor space in the present church is double that of the 1859 structure, for there are five floors as well as a large basement. In addition to the sanctuary, the Radcliffe Room, the Lincoln Chapel and the Lincoln Parlor, there are Sunday School rooms, church offices, two kitchens, two dining rooms, and rooms for the Music Department and for the Community Club. The large dining and recreation room on the fifth floor is appropriately named in memory of Dr. Peter Marshall, whose joy and zest in witnessing for Christ attracted many—particularly young people—to the church.

The sanctuary with a seating capacity of approximately 1350 is a third larger than that of the 1859-1950 church. The brass lectern, which is a replica of one in Westminster Abbey, and the baptismal font are retained from the former church. Dr. Docherty is chiefly responsible for the design of the communion table, the pulpit, and the wood paneling behind the pulpit.

The church tower chimes, which open every Sunday service at New York Avenue, were made by a firm that had ties with the family of Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks. These chimes and the tower clock, as well as the tower of the former church which first housed them, were donated in 1928 by the Robert Todd Lincoln family in memory of President Lincoln.

The Sanctuary Cross

THE SANCTUARY CROSS is a reproduction in hand-beaten bronze of the 10th Century Cross of St. John, which stands at the west door of the Abbey of Iona in Scotland. The original is a fourteen-foot massive schist of granite. The Sanctuary Cross weighs about one hundred seventy pounds and is six feet in height. The shaft of the Cross is ornamented with bosses of foliage and interlacing design characteristic of the Celtic Church's reverence for nature. At the crossing an embossed circle contains the everlasting pattern symbolizing the unbroken entwining of the life of man with God. At the ends of the cross beam are embossed circles denoting the five wounds of Our Lord—the nail prints on hands and feet and the sword thrust in His side. The characteristic Celtic circle symbolizes the Sun, once worshipped by the Druids, now Incarnate and crucified in fulfillment of Druid prophesy that the Sun would visit the earth in human form.



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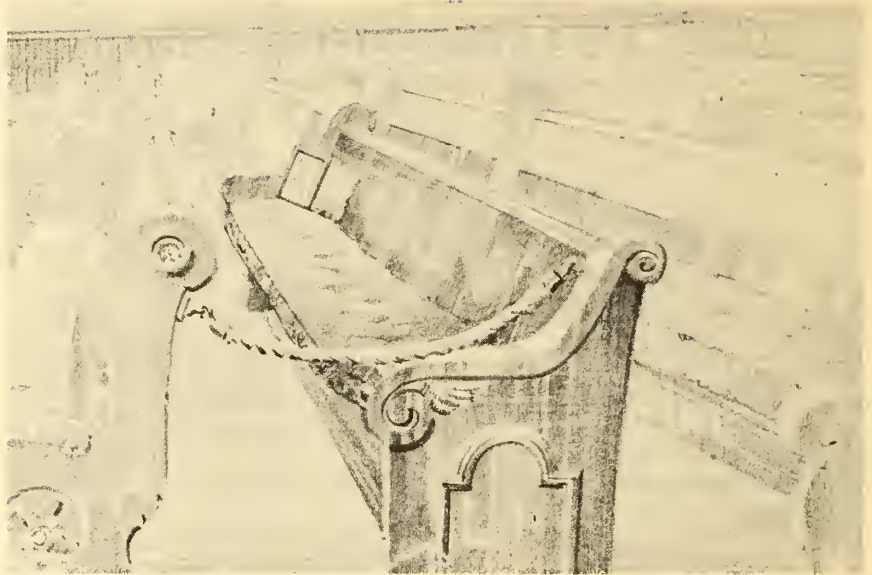
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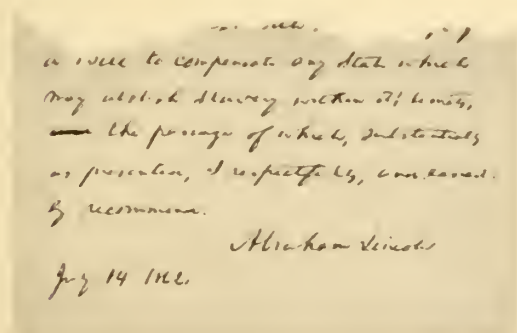


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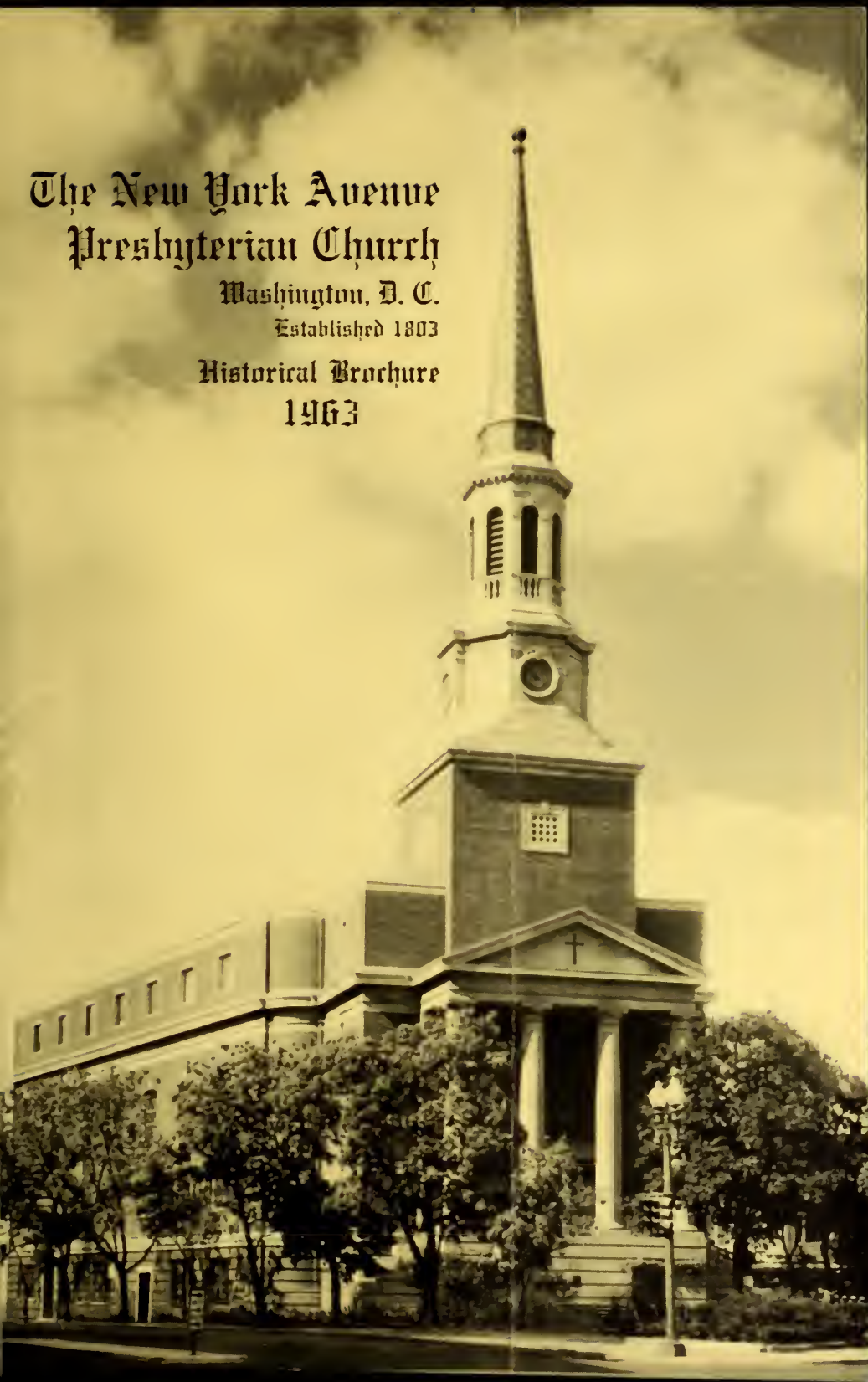
The New York Avenue
Presbyterian Church

Washington, D. C.

Established 1803

Historical Brochure

1963



Welcome



George M. Docherty
Minister, 1950-

THE NEW YORK AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH is always privileged to welcome guests from across the nation and from countries throughout the world. This little brochure is published in the hope that it may preserve for our friends the memory of their visit. May those who read it, when they return home, recall a time of worship in our capital, when together all differences were united in common prayer and praise, and all to the Glory of God.

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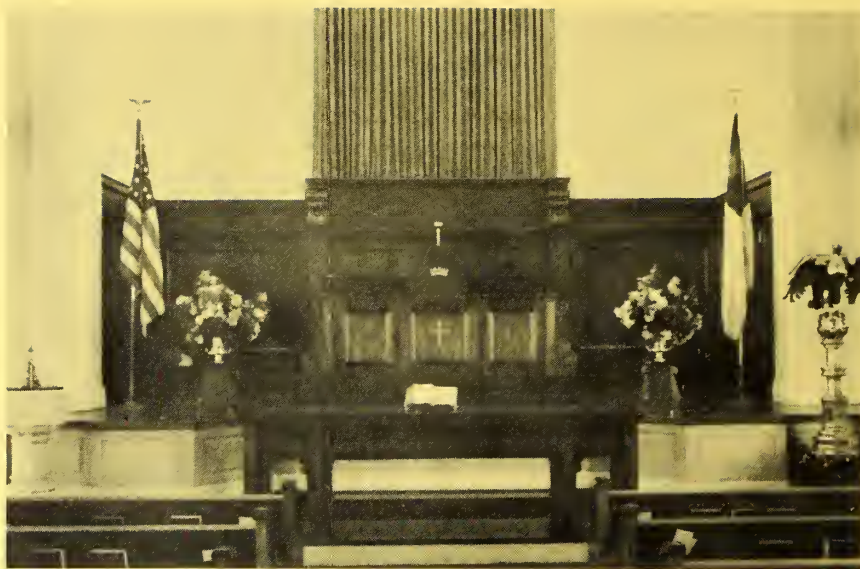
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The sanctuary with a seating capacity of approximately 1350 is a third larger than that of the 1859-1950 church. The brass lectern, which is a replica of one in Westminster Abbey, and the baptismal font are retained from the former church. Dr. Docherty is chiefly responsible for the design of the communion table, the pulpit, and the wood paneling behind the pulpit.

The church tower chimes, which open every Sunday service at New York Avenue, were made by a firm that had ties with the family of Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks. These chimes and the tower clock, as well as the tower of the former church which first housed them, were donated in 1928 by the Robert Todd Lincoln family in memory of President Lincoln.

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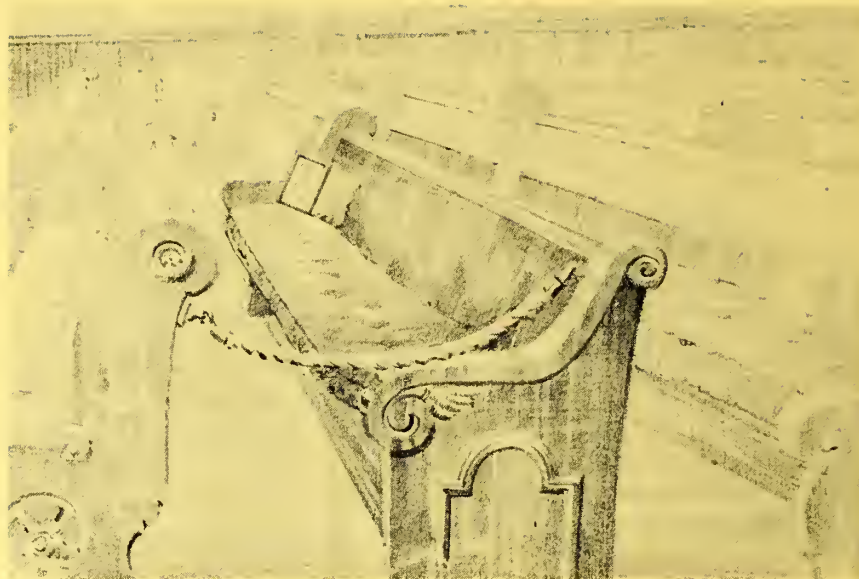
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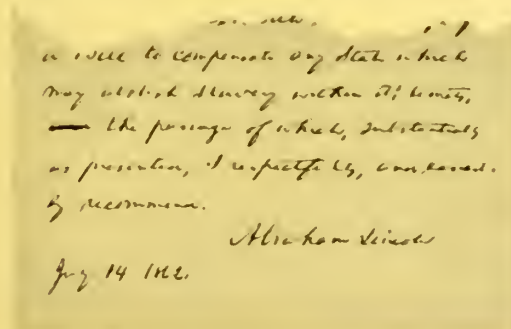


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MRS. W. L. TIMANUS, *Housekeeper*
RAMON D. MASON, *Night Engr. & Beadle*
LAWRENCE B. CARTER
ROBERT L. GORDON *Sextons*
R. COY HUGHES
ALEXANDER W. MANNING
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2126

SUNDAY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT:

About 816

The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church

1313 NEW YORK AVENUE, N. W.

Washington, D. C. 20005

November 5, 1968

Mr. Bert Sheldon
3315 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20016

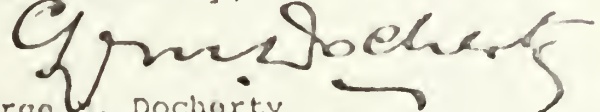
My dear Mr. Sheldon:

I was happy to know you visited our church. Do come back again.

Concerning your comments on the "Lincoln Room": in the old building, erected in 1859 and taken down in 1948, there was a "Lincoln Room" where Mr. Lincoln used to sit during prayer meetings on Wednesday evening during the time of the Civil War. In the new building the Lincoln Chapel stands in approximately the same location as the former "Lincoln Room". The furniture in our Lincoln Parlor, which stands at the H Street side of the building, was taken from the original "Lincoln Room". It seemed to the congregation a sufficient memorial to name the chapel the Lincoln Chapel and the room the Lincoln Parlor. Outside the church building a plaque has been raised by the District of Columbia designating our church as one of the significant buildings of the city wherein Mr. Lincoln's connection with the congregation is inscribed. Beyond this the congregation at no time thought it necessary to proceed.

Thank you very much for writing.

Yours sincerely,



George M. Docherty
Minister

THE NEW YORK AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Washington, D. C.
ESTABLISHED 1803

HISTORICAL BROCHURE

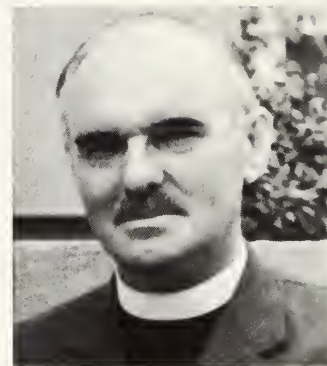
(1969)



(Price 10 cts.)

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The cornerstone of the present church building was laid on April 3, 1951, by President Harry S. Truman, and the new structure was dedicated on December 20th of the same year. It has colonial architectural lines, and the location of the sanctuary on the second floor is reminiscent of the old Presbyterian meetinghouse style.

Floor space in the present church is double that of the 1859 structure, for there are five floors as well as a large basement. In addition to the sanctuary, the Radcliffe Room, the Lincoln Chapel and the Lincoln Parlor, there are Sunday School rooms, church offices, two kitchens, two dining rooms, and rooms for the Music Department and for the Community Club. The large dining and recreation room on the fifth floor is appropriately named in memory of Dr. Peter Marshall, whose joy and zest in witnessing for Christ attracted many—particularly young people—to the church.

Nine stained glass windows in the area of the Sanctuary's main floor portray the sweep of the Providence of God beginning with the creation of the universe and ending with the "Church Triumphant" as described in the Book of Revelations. In order the windows depict: The Creation; Moses and the Law; The Prophets; The Nativity; The Baptism and Ministry of Jesus; The Last Supper; The Crucifixion; The Resurrection and the Church Triumphant.

Ultimately the balcony area will contain ten windows dedicated to the history of New York Avenue Church.

The sanctuary with a seating capacity of approximately 1350 is a third larger than that of the 1859-1950 church. The brass lectern, which is a replica of one in Westminster Abbey, and the baptismal font are retained from the former church. Dr. Docherty is chiefly responsible for the design of the communion table, the pulpit, and the wood paneling behind the pulpit.

The church tower chimes which open every Sunday service at New York Avenue, were made by a firm that had ties with the family of Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks. These chimes and the tower clock, as well as the tower of the former church which first housed them, were donated in 1928 by the Robert Todd Lincoln family in memory of President Lincoln.

The Sanctuary Cross

THE SANCTUARY CROSS is a reproduction in hand-beaten bronze of the 10th Century Cross of St. John, which stood at the west door of the Abbey of Iona in Scotland. The original is a fourteen-foot massive schist of granite. The Sanctuary Cross weighs about one hundred seventy pounds and is six feet in height. The shaft of the Cross is ornamented with bosses of foliage and interlacing design characteristic of the Celtic Church's reverence for nature. At the crossing an embossed circle contains the everlasting pattern symbolizing the unbroken entwining of the life of man with God. At the ends of the cross beam are embossed circles denoting the five wounds of Our Lord—the nail prints on hands and feet and the sword thrust in His side. The characteristic Celtic circle symbolizes the Sun, once worshipped by the Druids, now Incarnate and crucified in fulfillment of Druid prophecy that the Sun would visit the earth in human form.

The Sanctuary Cross was dedicated to the memory of Dr. Peter Marshall, and is the gift of the Peter Marshall Scottish Memorial Committee. The Cross is the work of the Celtic Art Industries of Scotland, and is the largest reproduction of the original St. John's Cross ever made.



The Organ

The first pipe organ in our church arrived in 1873, a gift of Alexander Shepherd, who was the last governor of the District of Columbia. The present organ, a gift of the late Mrs. George Whitney White, was built by the late Ernest M. Skinner, one of the last organs he built, and installed in 1942.

The organ was installed in the present building in 1951.

The organ has three manuals, 45 stops, 48 ranks, 2,759 pipes, of which 846 are the exposed Great and Pedal divisions.

Present plans call for further renovations and additions to the organ, including a new console, a new independent Pedal organ, a new Positiv organ, and the addition of several other new ranks of pipes.

Henry Booker, our organist, is a native Washingtonian, a graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and former pupil of Marcel Dupré.



The Choirs

During the ministry of Dr. Peter Marshall, a volunteer choir music program was established with Charles Dana Beaschler as the Minister of Music, and a morning and evening choir were formed.

Stephen H. Prussing, who has been our Director of Music since December 1950, has continued this outstanding choir leadership. Under his direction the morning and evening choirs, numbering 125 volunteer singers, perform several major works and sing as many as 190 anthems each year, in addition to producing operettas and choir concerts. Mr. Prussing has also formed two children's choirs, which are a part of the church school program.



The Lincoln Pew

AFTER PRESIDENT AND MRS. LINCOLN decided early in 1861 to make the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church their church home, a diagram of the pews available for their selection was taken to the White House. The pew chosen by the Lincolns became known with the passing of time as the Lincoln Pew.

In 1886-7 new light oak pews were installed in the sanctuary, replacing the former dark colored ones, and the Lincoln Pew was transferred to a Sunday School room. In 1893, at the congregational meeting, a resolution was made to return this pew to its former location, and after considerable delay the transfer was effected. A silver plate was put on the Lincoln Pew when it once again took its rightful place in the sanctuary, seventh from the front row on the right-hand side of the center aisle.

The Lincoln Chapel

During the pastorate of Dr. Sizoo, the room which had been the minister's study and an adjoining room were altered to become the Lincoln Parlor and the Lincoln Chapel. These changes were made in remembrance of the dark days of the Civil War, when President Lincoln was often a silent worshiper in the minister's study, while Dr. Gurley, the minister, was conducting the regular mid-week prayer meeting, beyond the partly closed doors, in the adjoining lecture room. Lincoln felt that this arrangement would best preserve the reverent atmosphere of the service, and both he and Dr. Gurley kept his attendance a closely guarded secret. One snowy evening, however, two boys of the church, full of curiosity, traced the "tall stranger" back to the White House by following his large foot-prints in the snow.

During the construction of the present church building in 1951 two stained-glass windows, the gift of Mrs. Helen Parker Willard, were installed in the Lincoln Chapel.



The Lincoln Chapel

The Lincoln Manuscript

In the Lincoln Parlor there is exhibited the original manuscript of the first draft of President Lincoln's first proposal to abolish slavery. This document, which is written in Lincoln's own handwriting, was presented to New York Avenue by Mr. Barney Balaban, President of Paramount Pictures. On February 8, 1953, in the presence of President and Mrs. Dwight D.



Eisenhower, it was unveiled by Mr. Balaban and dedicated by Dr. Docherty.

The manuscript, which is written in the form of a Bill and is dated July 14, 1862, offers to compensate any State which would abolish slavery within its limits. When the final Proclamation of Emancipation was written, however, and later signed and issued by President Lincoln on January 1, 1863, it declared the slaves to be "forever free."

... shall ...
to well to compensate any state which
may abolish slavery within its limits,
and the passage of which, substantially
as presented, I respectfully recommend
by recommendation.
Abraham Lincoln
July 14 1862.

Excerpt of the Lincoln Manuscript

Dr. Gurley, the minister of New York Avenue during this period, had developed a close friendship with the Lincoln family and was consulted by the President in regard to a draft of the Proclamation. There is considerable evidence that several of Dr. Gurley's suggestions were incorporated into the final document.

Church Directory

MINISTERS

THE REV. GEORGE M. DOCHERTY, D.D.
 THE REV. JACK E. MCCLENDON, Ph.D.
 THE REV. PAUL R. WATSON, JR.
 THE REV. ANDREW H. RANSOM
 THE REV. SANG-YUB AHN

MINISTRY OF MUSIC

STEPHEN H. PRUSSING, *Director*
 HENRY J. BOOKER, JR., *Organist*

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 MRS. HILDA W. MOFFIT, *Church*
 HENRY J. BOOKER, JR., *Staff*
 MRS. HERBERT ADDISON, *Inner City*

COMMISSIONED CHURCH WORKER

MRS. THELMA ODOM

MISSIONARIES

DR. AND MRS. FORREST EGGLESTON
 Christian Medical College
 Ludhiana, Punjab, India

MISS KATIE TURNER
 Kartoum, the Sudan

MR. AND MRS. ARTHUR DODD
 Ganado Mission, Arizona

CHURCH OFFICE

1313 New York Avenue, N.W.

Telephone: 393-3700

For the latest information about church organization and activities, please contact the Church Office

General Information

SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning:

9:30 and 11:00 A.M.
 Coffee Hour in the Radcliffe Room
 Following all services
 (Child care for all children through the Junior Department during both morning services)

CHURCH SCHOOL

Sunday:

9:30 A.M. (all ages)

Saturday:

10:30 A.M. (handicapped children)

COMMUNITY CLUB

Activities for neighborhood children

MID-WEEK SERVICE

Wednesday, 6:30 P.M.

CHOIR REHEARSALS

Friday at 7:30 P.M.

ADULT CHURCH GROUPS (September through June)

Women's Association: (September through June)

Daytime General Meeting:
 3rd Wednesday

Evening General Meeting:
 3rd Tuesday

Daytime Circles:
 1st Wednesday

Evening Circles:
 1st Tuesday

MARINER'S CLUB

1st Friday each month

CONGREGATIONAL DINNERS:

Open to visitors
 5:30-6:30 P.M., Wednesday
 (September through May)

CHURCH LENDING LIBRARY

Sunday morning, following 9:30 and 11:00 o'clock services

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP: 1950

SUNDAY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: 682

ORIGIN — PURPOSE — IMPLEMENTATION — FUNDING

ORIGIN

The Lincoln Commission of The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church was authorized by the NYA Session April 27, 1971, in order to provide continuing leadership and coordination for NYA activities commemorative of Abraham Lincoln. For more than forty years before 1971 the annual NYA Lincoln programs were conducted by ad hoc committees.

Commission appointees were selected by the Minister, Dr. George M. Docherty, appointments being for three-year terms with one-third expiring each year. Commission members are a representative cross-section of people interested in Lincoln. They include people, inside and outside the NYA congregation, from various professions and vocations, e.g., business, clergy, education, homemaking, government, industry, law, military, news media, science and medicine. The first meeting of the Commission was held July 29, 1971.

PURPOSE

Over a period of years during which his life was scarred by deep tragedies, and the very existence of our nation was threatened, President Abraham Lincoln regularly attended The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, seeking spiritual support and divine guidance. Through the resources of the church he received insight in dealing with his personal problems and with the strife within the nation, as well as with the causes of the conflict that imperiled our national life.

The relationship of President Lincoln with The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church and its Minister, Dr. Phineas D. Gurley, during those trying years of his presidency is a historic fact and a significant example of one form of the ministry of the church. The purpose of this Commission is to celebrate that relationship through cultural, educational, and spiritually uplifting programs and activities, and to foster this and like forms of the ministry of the church.

IMPLEMENTATION

To accomplish its purpose The Lincoln Commission is empowered to establish, support, sponsor, or endorse (a) special anniversary observances, (b) research projects to clarify, and inform the public on, the significance of President Lincoln's spiritual insights and values and his relationship with the NYA Church, (c) a Lincoln Lecture-ship to bring the Christian heritage more widely to bear on contemporary questions, conditions, and problems of the American community, (d) other appropriate cultural, educational, and inter-faith projects relating to Lincoln, and (e) liaison and cooperation with scholars, groups, organizations and institutions interested in Lincoln.

FUNDING

The work of The Lincoln Commission is financed from voluntary sources outside the annual budget of the NYA Church. The financial backing of individuals and organizations interested in Lincoln is vitally necessary to accomplish the Commission's purpose. All are invited to help underwrite the work of the Commission. Its success will depend on continued voluntary support.

Offerings, donations, special gifts, grants, insurance benefits, and bequests should be made to The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church for use of The Lincoln Commission, 1313 New York Avenue, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20005, (202) 393-3700. These contributions are tax-deductible.

THE LINCOLN COMMISSION OF
The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church

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Washington, D. C. 20005

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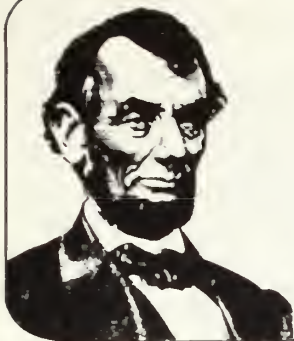
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Lincoln Lore

March, 1976

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Number 1657

Lincoln and "Civil Religion"

Abraham Lincoln's religion was once a subject of burning controversy among most Lincoln students. Richard N. Current gave the subject its last notable consideration by an academic historian in 1958 (in his chapter entitled "The Instrument of God" in *The Lincoln Nobody Knows*). Since then, churchmen, theologians, and professional students of religion have claimed the field that historians have aban-

doned. Far and away the most capable work produced since 1958 is William J. Wolf's *The Almost Chosen People: A Study of the Religion of Abraham Lincoln*, published in 1959 and reissued as *The Religion of Abraham Lincoln* in 1963 and as *Lincoln's Religion* in 1970. Wolf, a professor at the Episcopal Theological School, wrote a balanced account that deserves its popularity. Since then, however, the studies of Lincoln's



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 1. "A Communion Gathering in the Olden Time" is an illustration from *Presbyterian Reunion: A Memorial Volume, 1837-1871* (New York: De Witt C. Lent, 1870). It is suggestive of the norm of American religious experience in Abraham Lincoln's day. Even the restrained Presbyterians held religious services out of doors, away from an institutional church. And one can see that the single minister seems almost inadequate for the masses present.

religion have become increasingly didactic, championing Lincoln as "the chief theologian of civil religion" that America reputedly needs now. Elton Trueblood's *Abraham Lincoln: Theologian of American Anguish*, published in 1973, is the most widely noted of these recent attempts to find in Lincoln a model for a twentieth-century theology.

A word about this twentieth-century theology, "civil religion," is in order. It is a loose liberal theology which says that the nation in its history must be informed by some spiritual role. As a liberal theology, it conceives of spirituality as embodied in part in social morality. As Herbert Richardson says in "Civil Religion in Theological Perspective" (in Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones, eds., *American Civil Religion* [New York: Harper and Row, 1974]), "The concept 'civil religion' unites two terms: the civil order and the religious order." It is broadly ecumenical and therefore rather uninstitutional, unchurchly, and anti-creedal. It is historically oriented and conceives of revelation as a gradual historical development. A recent critic of civil religion (and of Abraham Lincoln as theologian or prophet of the religion), Melvin B. Endy, Jr., of the Religion Department at Hamilton College, terms it "simply . . . the mythic belief that the United States is a latter-day chosen nation that has been brought into existence and providentially guided as a fundamentally new social order to serve uniquely as a 'city on a hill' for the rest of mankind."

Abraham Lincoln is an important prophet in this scheme for several reasons, not the least of which is that he never too closely identified this nation's purposes at any one time with God's will. Champions of civil religion fear just what its critics harp on as its dangerous weakness: it might lead to an intolerant belief that this nation state can do no wrong. The Civil War President's famed expression of concern "that I and

this nation should be on the Lord's side" in response to a clergyman's question whether "the Lord was on our side" becomes a crucial episode for the advocates of civil religion. (In truth, this quotation is known to us only through the second-hand recollections of painter Francis Bicknell Carpenter, *Six Months in the White House* [New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1866], page 282.) Another major document, of course, is the Second Inaugural Address with its forgiving pledge of "malice towards none; . . . charity for all." Thus Lincoln strived to make the war a moral crusade against the social evil of slavery without ever assuming that God's purpose was so clear that the opposition had to be seen strictly as malevolent forces of Satan's darkness. "His patriotism," says Trueblood, "was of such magnitude that it cannot easily be exaggerated, but it was never idolatrous, and it was saved from idolatry by the overwhelming sense of the sovereignty of God" (page 118).

Once Lincoln's Christian statesmanship is so interpreted, it is easy to fit the rest of his life into a scheme which nicely fits the demands of civil religion. His own personal faith developed historically and slowly through periods of anguished doubt and uncertainty about the divine will. "One of the important features of Lincoln's theology" as Trueblood describes it, was "that it was a *development*." Lincoln's "spiritual pilgrimage" led from "theological positions of his early manhood" to mature ones which had "little in common" with the earlier ones. In fact, he probably went through a stage in which he was the village skeptic:

In his effort to reach a rational theology, Lincoln as a young man had very little real help. There was no church at New Salem, and few of his neighbors cared greatly about ideas. Though the deep sense of reverence which had developed in the Indiana forest seems never to have left the young man, he began to speculate in ways which made some people think of him as verging on infidelity. Certainly he was influenced for a time by the amateur philosophizing of his pioneer neighbors, as he revolted against the ignorant preaching which he heard from time to time. As a young boy in Indiana, he had enjoyed mimicking the hell-fire and brimstone preachers of the raw frontier.

Lincoln argued, for a time, a belief in what he called the "Doctrine of Necessity," what we would call determinism today.

In 1841, Lincoln and Mary Todd temporarily broke off their engagement to be married. Lincoln was thrown into such a slough of despond that he neglected his duties as a legislator and went to visit his old friend Joshua Speed in Kentucky. Speed's mother-in-law gave Lincoln a new Bible, and Lincoln said of it in a letter, ". . . I intend to read it regularly when I return home. I doubt not that it is really, as she says, the best cure for the 'Blues' could one but take it according to the truth." Twenty years later in the White House, Lincoln still remembered the gift of the Bible. Most historians mark this date, 1841, as a time when Lincoln began to have a renewed awareness of the Revealed Word.

The next step in his spiritual pilgrimage was a new awareness of the Word as it came from preachers. In 1850, Lincoln's three-year-old son Edward Baker died after a fifty-two day illness. Mary Lincoln was so shaken that she joined Springfield's First Presbyterian Church, the pastor of which, Dr. James Smith, consoled her and preached the sermon at her son's funeral. Her husband did not join, but he began to attend services more regularly, as is evidenced by his renting a pew in Dr. Smith's church.

The years of the Civil War were the last big step in Lincoln's pilgrimage. It was a time so suffused with a sense of crisis and great moral questions that it is difficult to focus on specific events in the way one can in Lincoln's earlier life. Nevertheless, one date does seem to stand out in all accounts, February 20, 1862. On that day, Lincoln's eleven-year-old son William Wallace died. Mrs. Lincoln, who had herself been severely shaken by the domestic tragedy, recalled later, in re-



Courtesy Illinois State Historical Library

FIGURE 2. Dr. James Smith was the minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Springfield from 1849 to 1856. President Lincoln remembered the family's consolers and appointed him Consul to Dundee, Scotland.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 3. The First Presbyterian Church of Springfield, Illinois, had as a full-fledged member Mary Todd Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln rented a pew there and heard some of Dr. Smith's sermons.

gard to Lincoln's religion, "He first seemed to think about the subject when our boy Willie died, and then more than ever about the time he went to Gettysburg." (Mrs. Lincoln admitted, incidentally, that her husband was "never a technical Christian.") Mary Todd Lincoln could not herself completely sort out the discrete events of that blurred period of daily crises, and she seems to have linked his religious development somewhat with the Gettysburg Address. But she did recall that there was an abrupt change (it was the "first" time he thought about it) after Willie's death.

Thus Lincoln's religion, never orthodox but increasingly profound, developed fully in time, the civil religionists tell us, to inform the most important actions of his Christian statesmanship, especially, of course, the Emancipation Proclamation, decided on as a policy by Lincoln in the summer of 1862.

Religious writers are now much too sophisticated to fall for the myriad of unreliable stories of secret promises made to clergymen days before his death that Lincoln was to convert and become a full-fledged member of some church or other. They listen to what the historians tell them were the facts of Lincoln's religious life and attempt merely to interpret them in their own way. They seem in a great haste, though, to master the facts and move on to the important didactic work at hand. Unfortunately, the Lincoln story deserves a more leisurely examination, the sort of examination which does not wrench the man from his historical context but carefully measures him against the events and culture of his own times.

In his haste to fit Lincoln into his theological scheme, Trueblood has failed to fit Lincoln into the historic surroundings of Lincoln's own life. There was a sort of American civil religion that was being championed in Lincoln's own time, and he was notably impervious to its appeal. In fact, there was an attempt to found a specifically religious party in American politics in

the 1850's, the American or Know Nothing party. Informed by an impatient reforming zeal to take a stand on issues which the established Whig and Democratic parties avoided, the Americans waged campaigns to lengthen the period of naturalization for immigrants to twenty-one years (the same time it took a native-born American to gain the franchise), to exclude foreign-born citizens from holding public office, and, above all else, to keep the Catholic Church from receiving public money for parochial schools. The public schools of Lincoln's day required Bible reading and supplied the Bible used by Protestants for the purpose. Catholics used a different Bible and reasoned that their tax dollars ought not to go to the purpose of changing their sons and daughters into Protestants. The issue stirred hatred and political excitement as only public school issues can in American political history.

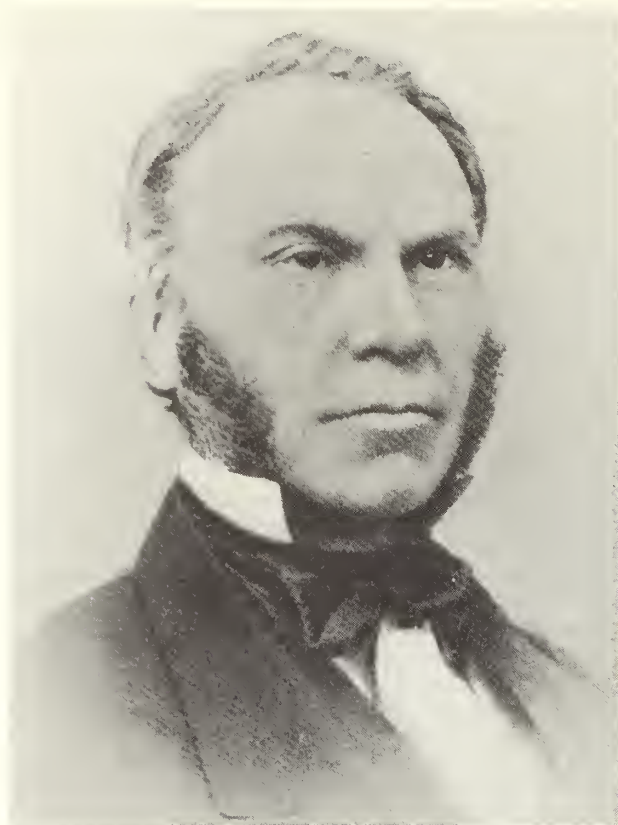
Although Know Nothingism did not measure up to the standards of today's ecumenism, it was at least a nonsectarian movement. It required cooperation among all the differing Protestant sects to the end of halting what was viewed as the Roman menace to American civil liberties. The chief complaint against the Roman Catholic Church was that it did not believe in separation of church and state nor in freedom of thought and expression, two fundamental aspects of American political identity. Complaints about specific religious interpretations of, say, the Eucharist did not find their way into the political literature.

That Lincoln was never tempted by the Know Nothings is common knowledge. That the temptation must have been very great is not so commonly acknowledged. Lincoln told Owen Lovejoy on August 11, 1855, that the Know Nothings in Springfield "are mostly my old political and personal friends; and I have hoped their organization would die out without the painful necessity of my taking an open stand against them." The Know Nothing enthusiasm even infected Lincoln's own home. In 1856, he cast his fortunes with the Republicans and John Charles Frémont. The Americans and Whig remnants also had a candidate in the field, Millard Fillmore, and, had there been female suffrage in that day, Mrs. Lincoln would have voted for a different candidate from her husband. Writing to her sister Emilie Todd Helm on November 23, 1856, Mrs. Lincoln discussed the recent election:

Your Husband, I believe, like some of the rest of ours, has a great taste for politics & has taken much interest, in the late contest, which has resulted very much as I expected, not hoped—

Altho' Mr L^r is, or was a *Fremont* man, you must not include him with so many of those, who belong to *that party*, an *Abolitionist*. . . . My weak woman's heart was too Southern in feeling, to sympathise with any but Fillmore, I have always been a great admirer of his, he made so good a President & is so just a man & feels the *necessity* of keeping foreigners, within bounds. If some of you Kentuckians, had to deal with the "wild Irish," as we housekeepers are sometimes called upon to do, the south would certainly elect Mr Fillmore next time[.]

Lincoln's religion was exempt from the anti-Catholic animus which was a norm of American Protestantism in that pre-ecumenical era. In fact, Lincoln's religion was for the most part unlike that of most Americans in his day. The other great aspect of antebellum Protestantism was evangelicalism, enthusiastic revivalism. Indeed, the two great forces were closely related. The original impulse for revivalism in the two decades after 1800 had fed, in some part, off the fear of the Catholic menace in the West. And both phenomena were aspects of enthusiastic religion. There was no cool rationalism in the barks, jerks, laughing exercises, singing exercises, anxious benches, prayers of faith, and sermons from the heart which gave this era of American religious history, known as the Second Great Awakening, its distinctive cast. And there was no cool rationalism in the Know Nothing



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 4. The Reverend Phineas D. Gurley ministered to Lincoln's spiritual needs while he was President. He conducted Willie's funeral service and delivered the funeral address at the White House after Abraham Lincoln's death.

movement, which Michael F. Holt has described as "the politics of impatience." By contrast, Lincoln's religion was notably quiet, private, and rationalistic rather than enthusiastic in tone.

Now doubtless the civil religionists' answer to this would be that I have just pointed out all the reasons that Abraham Lincoln is the superior prophet of American civil religion. They argue that a civil religion is inevitable. Therefore, they would simply say that Lincoln's is the superior version of civil religion, uniting morality and statecraft without uniting specific religious institutions and the state. In fact, Elton Trueblood finds just these traits to be the superior ones in Lincoln's religious example: (1) He never joined a church because no creed was completely satisfactory. (2) His religion needed no ministers and no institutional church; it was a religion that relied on the Bible and private prayer and a careful and humble reading of the Divine Plan as revealed gradually in the workings of the American electorate. There was no embarrassing fundamentalist enthusiasm about Lincoln's dignified calls for national days of fasting and thanksgiving during the Civil War. (Mr. Trueblood, incidentally, is a Quaker, and his own religion has never required preachers or an institutional church.)

It is unfair and unhistorical to suggest by this that Lincoln was superior to his benighted age and that his more restrained religious experience looked forward to a better day when passionate emotionalism would wither and religion would be more dignified, more sophisticated, and less the result of crude mechanical contrivances like the anxious bench. Actually, the norm of religious experience in Lincoln's own day was increasingly anti-creedal (in that it stressed the role of the heart in conversion over the role of any intellectual assent to

systematic doctrine enunciated in theological sermons). It was also anti-churchly. Revivals took place in camps and fields and tents, not within the confines of an institutional church presided over by an established minister. Lincoln's religion thus resembled the religion of his day in *unessential* matters; it was different in the essential one, the personal form of expressing religious passion. Many Americans did it by falling on the ground or at least by professing a changed heart. Lincoln expressed it in musings on the mysterious workings of the Divine Will and apparently by increasing private reading of the Bible and increased attention to religious teaching by ministers.

The civil religionists were so happy to find in Lincoln's spiritual pilgrimage a gradual development or growth that flowered finally in those war years of terrible passion that they failed to note the most obvious aspect of it: *it was always utterly private and personal.*

All of the major landmarks of Lincoln's religious history were events which had absolutely nothing to do with civil society, the state, the nation, politics, moral reform, or the general public. He found the Bible as a cure for deep personal depression caused by the break up of his romance with Mary Todd. He first rented a pew in a church when he experienced the death of an infant son. He took his first interest in religion large enough for his wife to perceive it when he lost another young son to death in 1862. Mrs. Lincoln said his interest *increased* at the time of the Gettysburg Address, but she said it was triggered by Willie's death. It seems wrongheaded to try to found a *civil* religion on a prophet who was utterly *private* in his own religious experience. The civil religionists use Lincoln's example to inspire a form of religion which did not move Abraham Lincoln himself.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 5. The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church was Phineas Gurley's pulpit. The church now contains chimes and bells that were gifts of Robert Todd Lincoln and Mary Lincoln Isham, son and granddaughter of Abraham Lincoln.

NEW YORK METHODIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
WASHINGTON, D.C.

DRAWER 4A

CHURCHES

